# NEVIN

ON THE

# CATECHISM

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# HISTORY AND GENIUS

OF THE

# HEIDELBERG CATECHISM.

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# PREFACE.

The small work here offered to the public owes its origin, in some measure, to the latter portion of a series of Essays, which appeared during the years 1841 and 1842, in the Weekly Messenger, under the general caption of the *Heidelberg Catechism*. The publication was called forth by the occasion of the late Centenary of the German Reformed Church in this country; and was designed, to serve the object of that celebration, in the way of bringing home to the consciousness of the Church, in popular form, an imperfect sketch at least of her own history and constitution, as unfolded in Europe first and afterwards on this side of the Atlantic. There was an earnest call at the time for the whole, in the form of a separate volume. It has been judged best not to comply with this request; but it seemed important, at the same time, to throw into a more permanent form so much at least of the articles in question as had respect to the direct history of the Catechism itself. This is now done in

the present publication; which however is not a reprint simply, to any extent, of what was previously published, but in all respects another work, in which the old material is taken up, with the addition of a good deal that is new, into a much more thorough and complete form.

The series of Essays in the Messenger was prefaced, Dec. 9, 1840, with a short introduction, in which occurs the following passage, worthy for various reasons to be repeated in this place.

"The whole is intended to be a contribution to the celebration of our *Centenary Year*. One great object of this observance, it seems to me, should be to make the Church properly acquainted with herself, by connecting in her consciousness as far as possible the present with the past. We need, not only to look back on our history, as it belongs during the last hundred years to this western continent, but to follow it still farther back, to its commencement in the old world. We need to feel that we *have* a history, as old and as honorable to say the least as that of any other Protestant denomination; embodying a vital spirit of its own; enshrining principles and ideas, which are worthy of being cherished by us, as a precious legacy, through all coming time. The more we can be brought to commune familiarly and freely with the spirit of the Reformation, as it wrought mightily in the deeds, and uttered itself powerfully in the words, of our ecclesiastical ancestry, the better is it likely to be with us in all respects at the present time. In every community, whether it be religious or civil, it is of immense account to keep a firm hold in this way on the original life of the organization, by which it exists;

so far as this deserves to be looked upon as wholesome and sound. Reverence for the past—a history worthy of being cherished and honored, and a disposition to do filial homage to its authority — may be regarded as an indispensable condition of all spiritual greatness. In the affairs of religion, this inward sentiment of sympathy and union with the life of other ages is specially important; and all that tends to make it active, should be carefully and religiously encouraged, in opposition to every form of opinion or practice, which by a vain affectation of improvement, would impair the force of so sacred an association. Let us have progress, by all means; but let it be progress *upwards*, within the sphere of the original life of the Church itself, as a tree unfolds itself in growth and is the same tree still; not progress *outwards*, by which the life of the past, together with its form, is renounced, and "another gospel" introduced in the room of the old."

It has not been considered necessary to accompany the text of the work, from page to page, with particular references to the authorities, which have been made use of in its compilation. I may state here, in a general way, that I stand indebted for facts mainly to H. S. VAN ALPEN'S *Geschichte und Literatur des Heidelberg'schen Katechismus*, the 2nd volume of PLANCK'S *Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie*, and several articles in the large *Encyclopædie der Wissenschaften und Kuenste* now in course of publication by ERSCH and GRUBER. Other less considerable helps it is not necessary to mention. ALTING'S *Historia Ecclesiæ Palatinæ*, LENFANT'S *L'innocence*

*du Catechisme de Heidelberg*, J. C. KŒCHER's *Katechetishe Geschichte der Reformirten Kirche*, and other works in relation to the general subject which it would have been desirable to consult, have unfortunately not been within my reach.

Such as it is, the work is now committed to the Church, with the prayer that it may serve, under God's blessing, the interest of a sound church feeling, within its communion.

J. W. N.

*Mercersburg, February* 1847.

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## I. INTRODUCTION.

*The Reformation. Luther. The two Confessions. Reformed Church. Symbolical books. Heidelberg Catechism.*

The Reformation may be regarded, in one view, as an entirely new life in the history of Christianity. More deeply considered however, it will be found to stand in the closest living connection with this same history, as it had been regularly developed in the bosom of the Catholic Church for centuries before. It formed no absolute rupture with the old life of the body bearing this title; on the contrary, it was only its true and legitimate continuation, through the vast convulsive crisis which threatened at the time its total dissolution. In no other light can it be vindicated as the work of God.

Thus viewed, its origin is not to be referred to any particular man or men. Not with Luther or Zuingli, nor with the great age itself even to which they belonged, can it be said, strictly speaking, to have taken its start. The Middle Ages formed its womb. Through long centuries, the life of the Church had struggled previously towards this grand magnificent issue. The sixteenth century was but "the fulness of time," for the *revelation* of a process, which was before hidden indeed from the world, but had long wrought mightily nevertheless as a mystery of God, in the direction of the very result which was now reached. It was the life of the Church then as a whole, which, by the help of God's Spirit, gave birth to the Reformation, as a new

form of existence with which it had been pregnant for ages before. LUTHER and the other Reformers, with all their activity in furthering the work, were themselves in one sense the product of its power; being comprehended in fact in the general movement over which they seemed to preside, as a resistless world force, which they were insufficient either to fathom or control. They did not make the Reformation. The Reformation made *them*.

We find accordingly a sort of simultaneous outburst of the same great work in different lands, that makes it difficult to say precisely where it took its rise. The movement in Switzerland stood in no connection externally, at first, with the movement in Germany; and in some sense its presence in both these countries might seem to have been anticipated by the open action of the same general power in France. The proper cradle of the Reformation indeed was Germany; and its central personality, beyond all doubt, is presented to our view in the colossal figure of MARTIN LUTHER. But the work was not bound to him, in any way, as a whole. In France and Switzerland in particular, its course was altogether separate and free.

The movement from the beginning, was in a general view one and the same. It included in itself however two different ground tendencies, which, starting asunder at the very outset, came finally to a full opposition, and so, resolved themselves into two distinct communions or confessions. Hence, to characterize these divergent interests, the great denominational titles LUTHERAN and REFORMED.

This division sprang immediately from the sacramental question; especially as concerned with the point of Christ's presence in the holy eucharist. But the difference which here came into view, may be said to have affected the theory of christian doctrine throughout. It shows a most poor and superficial way of thinking, to look upon the sacramentarian controversy of the sixteenth century, as something only externally or accidentally related to the proper life of Protestantism—an arbitrary, isolated difficulty, created by the caprice of superstition simply, or mere blind self-will. To the religious consciousness of the time, the question stood intertwined with the entire scheme of the gospel, and was felt to reach out, in its bearings and consequences, to the farthest limits of theology. However then we may deplore the unhappy strife, we have no right to denounce it as unreasonable and wrong. It was unavoidably necessary, in the circumstances of the age. The question was in no sense factitious or supererogatory. It lay actually and broadly present in the religious movement of the period itself, whether men might choose to regard it or not. To have smothered it, or thrust it aside, as an interest of small account, would have been to betray the cause of truth, and wrong the whole work of the Reformation. There might have been controversy indeed, without a formal rupture of the Church. But this was hardly to be expected, in the case of an agitation so earnest and deep. Where two sides of a vital, fundamental truth, thus fall asunder for the understanding, it seems to be in general necessary, that the difference should be pushed out to the

point of a full formal contradiction, before the way can be opened for a final reconciliation, in which proper justice may be secured to the rights of both.

The origin of the *Reformed Church*, as distinguished from the *Lutheran*, is sometimes traced to the person of Ulrich Zuingli, the illustrious Reformer of *Zurich*, who led the way in the spiritual emancipation of Switzerland. This view however is in no proper sense correct. His relation to the Reformed Church historically, is not at all parallel with that of Luther to the body distinguished by his name. He occupies indeed a very prominent position in its history, as the father we may say of the Helvetic Reformation, and the leading organ at the start of the anti-Lutheran tendency with regard to the Lord's Supper. In this last view however, he was only the centre or nucleus, around which externally the opposition to Luther's doctrine on this subject, was first brought to take shape and form; while at the same time, the Reformation had already begun, we know, to reveal itself in France, under the same general character, without any dependence on him whatever. The Protestant movement, as such, included in its very nature, the Reformed tendency as well as the Lutheran; and it prevailed accordingly, under this complexion, in certain sections of the Church, from the beginning, irrespectively of all direct hostile reference to the opposite system. In this way, the Reformed Church appeared in different parts of the christian world at the same time, simultaneouly with the rise of the Lutheran Church. It owes its origin to France full as much, to say the least, as it

does to Switzerland. It was simply one great leading form of the Reformation itself, which in the nature of the case could not fail to display its presence, in different directions, in full parallel with the other great form of it, in every part of its progress. The man, who beyond all others unquestionably, in the sixteenth century, contributed to give solid form and character to the Church, under this aspect, was JOHN CALVIN, the founder of the Reformed faith in *Geneva*. Still CALVIN is not to be considered the father properly of the Reformed Church. It existed as a distinct interest, before he appeared on the stage of the Reformation; and with all his vast influence, his theological system never became universally predominant in its communion.

The *Reformed* Church acquired its distinctive title first in France; not with any reference of course to the Lutheran Protestantism of Germany, which was regarded as in all material respects one and the same interest; but in opposition wholly to the Church of Rome, against whose exclusive pretensions it claimed to be the true Church of Jesus Christ, now purged from the errors and abuses under which the truth had been previously so long oppressed. It was simply the *Catholic* Church Reformed. Afterwards however the title as transferred to the Church in Switzerland, and then to other countries, came to be distinctive particularly of that part of the Protestant world, which refused to be called *Lutheran*. By assuming this last name, the body thus denominated, divided itself openly from the other Confession; which was thus left in exclusive possession of the original general appellation, the *Re-*

*formed Church;* and this became accordingly thenceforward a technical title, carrying in it a reference to Lutheranism on the one hand, as well as to Romanism on the other.

Under this general title was comprehended, in the sixteenth century, the national Protestantism, not only of *Switzerland* and *France*, but of the *Netherlands* also and *Scotland* and *England*. The same faith substantially, became triumphantly established after a short time, in the German *Palatinate*; and in the end it prevailed extensively in other parts of Protestant Germany also, in competition with the other Confession.

Zuingli commenced his ministry in Zurich, in the year 1519. The work of reformation went forward afterwards rapidly, under his influence. As early as 1525, all was thoroughly Protestant. Bern, Basel, Schafhausen and St. Gall, soon followed in the same course; and before the death of Zuingli, who was slain in battle, A. D. 1531, more than half the Helvetic confederacy had become Reformed. Geneva threw off the authority of Rome, in 1535. Here Calvin, who had been forced to retire from his native France by persecution, found himself constrained to settle the following year; and through the vast force of his character, Geneva soon became the acknowledged centre of the entire Reformed Church. The first national Synod of the French Protestant Church was held at Paris, in the year 1559. About the same time, the Reformation became fully established in England, by the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the throne. Scotland soon after threw off the yoke of Rome, under the

guidance of JOHN KNOX. Through long years of civil war, the Church of Holland accomplished finally the same freedom. The Palatinate, previously Lutheran, passed over to the Reformed faith, A. D. 1560.

These different sections of the Reformed Church were regarded, in the beginning, as one and the same Confession. They were not however, like the Lutheran Church, bound together by subscription to a common creed. With an independent organization, each national branch of the general body had its own ecclesiastical standards. Hence a variety of Confessions and Catechisms; which serve strikingly however, by their general agreement, to attest the substantial unity of the faith to which they owe their existence.

The *First Confession of Basel*, supposed to be the production originally of ŒCOLAMPADIUS, was published, A. D. 1534. The Second Confession of Basel, known commonly as the *First Helvetic Confession*, made its appearance in 1536, under the sanction of a general ecclesiastical convention representing all Protestant Switzerland. The *Gallic Confession* was formed by an assembly of delegates from the Reformed churches of France, held at Paris, in the year 1559. With the religious revolution of 1560, was introduced in Scotland the *Old Scotic Confession*. The *Belgic Confession* became public in the Netherlands in 1562. In this same year, the *Thirty Nine Articles* of the Church of England, (a modification of the system previously projected in the reign of Edward VI. by CRANMER and RIDLEY,) were clothed with formal symbolical authority. The *Second Helvetic Confession*, drawn up by

Henry Bullinger in the year 1562, became of established general force for Switzerland A. D. 1566. The *Westminister Confession* belongs to the middle of the following century.

Along with these Confessions, various *Catechisms*, larger and smaller, appeared on all sides, as rules and helps for religious instruction. These it is not necessary to notice in detail. Among others, an excellent Catechism was composed for the use of the Church in Geneva by Calvin. It appeared in the French language A. D. 1541, and four years later in a Latin translation by the author. It surpassed decidedly all previous catechisms in the Reformed Church, and soon acquired a widely extended credit. Beza styles it an admirable work ; and tells us, that it was so highly approved even in foreign lands, as to be not only translated into the principal living tongues, such as German, English, Scotch, Belgic, Spanish, but honored besides with versions into Greek and Hebrew ; the first by the celebrated printer *Robert Stephens*, and the last by *Immanuel Tremellius*.

Still more important however than this formulary, for the Reformed Church as a whole, was the memorable Catechism of the Palatinate, or the Heidelberg Catechism ; which appeared in the year 1563, and soon won for itself a sort of universal authority in the Church, that no similar system has since been able to supplant. Its relation to the Reformed Church was soon allowed to be parallel, in this respect, with that of the venerable *Catechism of Luther* to the Lutheran Church ; a distinction not admitted before, in favor

even of the Catechism of Geneva. Hence it is denominated at times the *Reformed Catechism*, as representing, by general acknowledgment, the faith of the entire communion, distinguished by the same title in the sixteenth century. It is much more indeed than a Catechism, in the ordinary sense; being so constructed as to serve, at the same time, the purpose of a full church Confession. It stands forth accordingly with special prominence, not only among the Catechisms, but among the regular Confessions also, of the period to which it belongs. In this view, it holds, we may say, the very highest distinction. If the question be asked, which among all the symbolical books that have appeared in the Reformed Church, has the best claim to be regarded in the light of an œcumenical or general symbol; the answer must be given undoubtedly, that it is the Heidelberg Catechism.

Such we find to be, in fact, the clear judgment of history itself. Though formed originally for the use of a particular territory only, the Catechism proved to be a true and happy exposition of the faith of the Reformed Church in general; and in a short time accordingly, it came to be recognized and honored as such, all over Europe. Where it was not exalted formally to the rank of a symbolical book, it was at least invested with the highest credit, as a work embodying in the most approved form, the doctrines of the Church at large. The authority of the prince under whose direction it was prepared, was sufficient indeed to bring it into general use in the Church of the Palatinate; but this authority could have no force beyond these limits.

Its favorable reception in other lands could be owing only to its own intrinsic worth, and the ready concurrence in its doctrine and spirit, which it met with from the Reformed Church in every direction. It was received indeed with a sort of universal homage, as an ornament to the creed which it was felt so well to represent. Switzerland, France, Scotland and England, joined in testifying towards it their admiration and respect. It was translated for the use of schools and churches in Hungary. It became the basis of religious instruction, for the Reformed Church generally in Germany. In the Netherlands it was clothed with the highest authority, in being made to constitute, along with the Belgic Confession, the national rule of faith. Finally by the Synod of Dort, the general council of the entire Reformed Church in the beginning of the seventeenth century, it was formally acknowledged and sanctioned, as a fair and proper representation of the Reformed faith in all lands. It became thus in form, to a certain extent, the accredited standard of the Church as a whole.

In all this we see the true importance of the Heidelberg Catechism. The relation which it bears to the whole Reformed Church of the sixteenth century, is full of interest, and such as may well make it an object of special regard in all ages. No other Catechism or Confession comes down to us, under the same broad catholic character, or with equal claims, in the view now mentioned, to historical attention and respect.

The history of the Catechism requires, in the first place, a brief review of the religious history of the Palatinate itself, in the age of the Reformation.

## II. THE PALATINATE.

*The Province. Heidelberg and its University. Luther at Heidelberg. Frederick the Wise. Otho-Henry. Frederick the Pious. Confessional agitations. State of the German Church in general. Bremen.*

The title PALATINATE, (in German *Pfalz*,) belonged formerly to two adjoining provinces of Germany, which were distinguished as *Upper* and *Lower*. The first *(Oberpfalz,)* bordered on Bohemia and Bavaria; the other *(Unterpfalz,)* was situated on both sides of the Rhine, touching on different sides Mayence, Wirtemberg, Baden, Alsace und Lorraine. It is frequently styled the *Palatinate of the Rhine;* and in spite of the horrible devastations to which it has been subjected in different ages, from the ruthless hand of war, is known as one of the most fertile and productive sections of Germany. Down to the year 1620, the two provinces belonged together; but when the elector, Frederic V. was put under the ban of the empire, after the battle of Prague, the Upper Palatinate was made over to Bavaria. In consequence of the great changes that took place in Europe after the French Revolution, the country which formerly constituted the Palatinate on the Rhine is now possessed by Prussia, Bavaria, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, &c. It is not easy of course to identify it, on a modern map.

*Heidelberg*, the ancient capital of the Palatinate,* early became conspicuous in the history of learning, by its celebrated university, established about the middle of the fourteenth century. The founder of this noble institution, to whose influence Germany is indebted for so much of her cultivation, was the elector *Rupert*, surnamed from the color of his beard the *Red*. At least forty years were needed, to bring the princely enterprize to its completion; and then large sums were sent to Rome, to procure the sanction of the Church in its favor. This was granted by a bull of pope Urban VI, A. D. 1385, in which Heidelberg is declared especially worthy, by the salubrity of its air and the fruitfulness of the surrounding country, to become such a general fountain of science.† The new university was required to conform to the model of the institution at Paris, and was endowed also with the same rights and privileges. The fostering care of his successors continued subsequently, to sustain and enlarge the work thus happily commenced by Rupert. Throughout the following century, we find, in connection with this university, a wholesome influence at work in the Palatinate, in favor of letters and religion; which, in the midst of

*Since 1802, a city of the grand-duchy of Baden; distinguished for its charming situation, at the foot of the beautiful Kœnigstuhl, and on the left bank of the lovely Neckar, over which is a bridge 700 feet long, and from which a most superb view extends, between high mountains, over the valley of the Rhine, to the Vosges.

†Prince Rupert's zeal for the university amounted to the character of a passion. He was accustomed to speak of it as his "beloved daughter" and watched over it with a father's care to the end of his life.

all adverse agencies, contributed largely, beyond all doubt, to the general movement which ushered in subsequently the glorious age of the Reformation.

The electors, Frederick I, and Philip the Upright, spared no pains to advance the credit of the university. Under the generous patronage of the latter, toward the close of the fifteenth century, we find in Heidelberg such men as *John Wessel*, *Rudolph Agricola*, the two *Reuchlins*, *Jacob Wimpheling*, &c., all warmly devoted to the cause of learning, and powerfully efficient in its advancement.

Philip died in the year 1508, and was succeeded in the government by Louis, the Pacific.

During this reign, in the year 1518, a general convention of the Augustinian monks was held at Heidelberg. Among others, MARTIN LUTHER, the monk of Wittemberg, as one of the most distinguished men of his order, was summoned to attend. He had shortly before, in the case of Tetzel, taken the first step in the great work of the Reformation, and was now fast becoming an object of earnest attention for all Europe. His friends used their influence to prevent him from undertaking the journey; for it was felt generally, to involve no inconsiderable risk of his personal safety. He considered it his duty however to go; and under the protection of a warm letter of recommendation addressed by the elector of Saxony to the elector of the Palatinate, he made his appearance at the appointed time in Heidelberg, having performed a good part of his journey on foot. Through the influence of *Œcolampadius*, who was at this time connected with the electoral court,

as instructor to the young prince, a favorable impression had already been created towards the extraordinary stranger. He found himself accordingly well received. On the suggestion of some of the brethren of his order, he offered himself to hold a public disputation, on the merit of good works and the value of the Aristotelian philosophy. The discussion attracted great attention; and the spirit and force with which Luther maintained his views, failed not to produce a deep impression on the minds of many who were present. Among his hearers were found, *John Œcolampadius*, *Martin Bucer*, *Ehrhard Schnepf*, *John Brentz* and *Theobald Billican;* men, whose names appear conspicuous in the subsequent history of the Reformation.

Luther returned to Wittemberg. But the seed which he had been permitted to sow in the Palatinate, remained behind, and soon began to reveal its power in the way of growth. From this time onward, such men as those whose names have been mentioned, exerted themselves in the work of disseminating evangelical principles; and the cause thus favorably introduced continued steadily to gain ground, till it was felt finally that the old system of religion was in danger of being entirely subverted. This led to persecution. Complaints were urged so successfully, that the public lectures of Luther's friends were at length altogether prohibited, and two of them, Brentz and Billican, were required to appear, and answer for their alleged errors, before the academical senate and the electoral chancellor; which resulted however in nothing worse than the suspension of their lectures. Louis the *Pacific*, as he was called, de-

voted mainly it would seem to hunting and building, did not allow himself to be much disturbed with the religious questions of the time; while his constitutional goodness of heart rendered him averse to all rigorous measures in the way of persecution. He discovered no particular zeal against the new doctrines, and the Reformation continued to diffuse itself accordingly like leaven, from Heidelberg as a centre, throughout the Palatinate and into the adjoining territories.

Louis was succeeded in 1544, by his brother, Frederick II, the Wise. This prince showed himself decidedly favorable to the Reformation; and under his auspices, the work immediately began to go forward with full power, in a more open way. In Heidelberg indeed, the people did not wait for the regular action of the government. As the mass was being celebrated in the church of the Holy Ghost, early in the year 1546, the whole congregation suddenly struck up the hymn in German: "Es ist das Heil uns kommen her." The elector now ordered, that the mass should be in future held in the vernacular language, that the Lord's Supper should be distributed in both kinds, and that the priests should be allowed to marry. The unfortunate issue of the war of Smalcald, put a full stop indeed, the very next year, to the movement thus auspiciously commenced. The so called *Interim* of the emperor, Charles V., was forced upon the Palatinate, and along with it came back once more, in full authority, the errors and superstitions of Rome. But God did not suffer the enemies of his cause to triumph long. Maurice, of Saxony, became unexpectedly the avenger of his country's wrongs, and

in 1552 the emperor found himself constrained, in the famous Pacification of Passau, to consent to the religious freedom of the German States.

The next elector, Otho-Henry, the Magnanimous, 1556, showed a still more active zeal in favor of the Reformation. Under his administration, the Augsburg Confession was fully established in the Palatinate. Old superstitions were abolished. A new system of church government was introduced. The city of Heidelberg became, in a short time, almost entirely Protestant. Warmly devoted besides to the cause of science and art, Otho-Henry distinguished his reign also by his generous endeavors to improve the university and city. "He was resolved," he said, "to place the university on right footing, if it should cost him his last cent."* Heidelberg was adorned with new magnificence, in the way of architecture and sculpture, under his princely hand.

Unfortunately however, the triumph of the Reformation brought along with it the seeds of new division. Protestantism was itself distracted, by conflicting views, and the idea of religious toleration was foreign from the genius of the age. The Palatinate included already three different parties, ranged under the names of Luth-

* While yet a young man, he purchased, in his visit to Palestine, a large number of Greek and Oriental manuscripts for the library. The first copy that had been brought to Europe of Abulfeda's work on geography, he procured at the price of 1000 dollars. Afterwards, under his administration, great additions were made to it from various quarters: so that it became, as the *Bibliotheca Palatina*, famous through all Europe.

er, Zuingli, and Calvin, or Melancthon—for these last two were held to be substantially the same, on the main question at issue. This of course was in relation to the Lord's Supper, the great central question of the age for the whole Protestant world. The division of sentiment was not allowed indeed, during this period, to come to an open rupture. But it was the source of much unquiet feeling, in a comparatively quiet way; and the elector was subjected to no small embarrassment at times, from the sense of its refractory presence.

Otho-Henry died, A. D. 1559. Few princes have been more deserving of respect. Without children himself, he transmitted his electoral dignity to his cousin FREDERICK THE THIRD, whose honorable distinction it is to be known in history under the surname of the *Pious*.

Under the administration of this prince, the Palatinate, previously Lutheran, passed over formally to the *Reformed* Confession. To understand fully the nature of this important change, to which immediately the Heidelberg Catechism owes its formation, it is necessary to glance at the religious posture of Protestant Germany in general, at the time it took place.

The great sacramental controversy of the sixteenth century, includes in its history two entirely distinct periods. As carried on in the first place between Luther and the Swiss divines, with Zuingli so long as he lived at their head, it was brought ostensibly to a close, by the memorable Wittemberg Concord, in 1536. This was not considered absolutely satisfactory indeed, on either side. But men's minds had become weary with

contention; and it was held desirable at all events to make the most of a present truce, where it seemed so difficult to come to a true and lasting peace. The result of all, had been undoubtedly moreover a partial moderation of extreme views on both sides. It was felt, more widely of course than it was expressed, that Luther on the one hand, as well as Zuingli on the other, had gone too far; and that the truth was to be sought in a middle position, rather than with either of the champions separately considered. Luther probably saw himself, that the truce involved some feeling of this sort; and this may have had its influence, in the effort by which he sought towards the close of his life to have the controversy renewed. The effort however produced no effect. Ten years after the date of the Concord, A. D. 1546, he was taken to his rest. The truce still continued. Many flattered themselves that it had become in fact, the grave of all former theological hostilities. But this expectation was vain. The general difference of the two Confessions had not yet been brought to a true inward reconciliation; and the question was too important, to be permanently sacrificed to the interests of a mere prudential compromise. It might slumber for twenty years; but it could not always sleep. In due time accordingly, the truce as a matter of course came to an end. We may find much to quarrel with, in the spirit of those who led the way in the new rupture that followed. The rupture itself however was necessary. It lay in the religious position of the age. It belonged of right to the history of the Reformation.

This second period of the controversy, was ushered in by a sort of trumpet blast on the part of the memorable Lutheran polemic, JOACHIM WESTPHAL, preacher in Hamburg; who felt himself called, in the year 1552, to sound an alarm throughout Germany against the errors of the Swiss Churches, in a special tract devoted wholly to the subject. The immediate occasion of this assault, seems to have been the way in which some distinguished theologians, whose standing might be counted intermediate or neutral with regard to the old controversy, had been led to declare their mind on the general subject. Specially prominent among these were *Peter Martyr* and *John Calvin*. In openly expressing their views, they had no thought of course of provoking controversy. It was not felt probably, that there was any danger of giving material offence in any direction, with the moderate tone of thinking which seemed to have become so generally prevalent at the time, in the Lutheran Church itself. Calvin had good reason to believe, that not only Melancthon, but very many others also who belonged to the same communion, held in truth the same view substantially with regard to the Lord's Supper that he held himself; and at all events, his own view was not something which he had now brought forward for the first time. He had held it all along in an open and public way; and had no reason to anticipate, that it would prove particularly offensive at this time. The truth was however, the cause of Westphal's displeasure, as well as of the general war that followed, lay much deeper than any such outward and accidental occasion. There had been, since 1536,

in the Lutheran Church itself, a broad though quiet, and to a great extent unconscious, falling away from the extreme view of the great Reformer. The tenth article of the Augsburg Confession had come to be held very extensively, in a simply Calvinistic sense. At the same time, the spirit of the old orthodoxy was not yet by any means extinct. It existed still, under a latent character, and as the event proved, in great strength. The progress of more liberal views, naturally served to rouse it finally, first to jealousy, and then to open resistance. In these circumstances, it needed no great provocation to bring on a war. Westphal was but the organ of the interest he represented, in its first show of violent reaction against a tendency which was now felt to threaten its own life. It was some consciousness of this no doubt, that served to inspire him with confidence and courage, in the daring responsibility he ventured to assume in this case before the christian world.

The *Farrago*, as his tract was styled, passed at first without notice or reply. Men seemed to pause, in anxious suspense, as with the secret feeling that they had come to stand on the eve of a great conflict, whose consequences no one could calculate or foresee. Westphal renewed his attack, the following year, in a second publication; and the year after again, in a third. Calvin found himself now compelled to take up the pen, in self-defence. Gradually the controversy began to assume a more general character. Other champions appear in the field. The true state of the Lutheran Church, as a house inwardly divided against itself, comes more and more into view. It is no longer

Germany at war with Switzerland ; but Germany convulsed with the elements of discord and division, in her own bosom. The whole land is agitated, in every direction, with the presence of a second sacramental war, more terrible than the first, carried on by rigid Lutherans and Crypto-Calvinists beneath the common banner of the Augsburg Confession. By such vast critical process, reaching through many long years of strife, were the two great Protestant Confessions conducted finally to the full sense of their own original difference and distinction. Lutheranism became complete in the Form of Concord ; and the faith of the Reformed Church, as exhibited in the several Calvinistic Confessions which appeared in the midst of this controversy, and particularly we may say as embodied comprehensively in the Heidelberg Catechism, was openly acknowledged in large sections of Germany, where the Reformed Church as such had been previously unknown.

A full account of these agitations and conflicts, would carry us far beyond the limits that belong properly to our present design. They form altogether one of the most strange and interesting chapters, in the church history of the sixteenth century.

The great point at issue in the controversy, as it now stood, was the *mode* simply of Christ's mystical presence in the holy eucharist. The fact of a real communication with his true mediatorial life, the substance of his body and blood, was acknowledged in general on both sides. The rigid Lutheran party however were not satisfied with this. They insisted on a nearer definition of the manner, in which the mystery must be

allowed to hold ; and contended for the formula, "*In, with, and under*," as indispensable to a complete expression of Christ's sacramental presence. He must be so comprehended in the elements, as to be received along with them by the *mouth*, on the part of *all* communicants, whether believers or unbelievers. It was for refusing to admit these extreme requisitions only, that the other party was branded with the title *Sacramentarian*, and held up to malediction in every direction as the pest of society. The heresy of which it was judged to be guilty stood simply in this, that the presence of Christ was held to be, after the theory of Calvin, not "in, with and under" the bread, but only *with* it ; not for the mouth, but only for *faith ;* not in the flesh, but only by the *Spirit ;* not for unbelievers therefore, but only for *believers*. This was the nature of the question, that now filled all Germany with conflagration. It respected wholly the mode of Christ's substantial presence in the Lord's Supper, not the fact of the mystery itself.

The intestine war broke forth first in the city of Bremen ; where it soon became very violent, and gradually involved the whole country in commotion. The immediate occasion of it was furnished by the distinguished preacher, *Albert Hardenberg ;* a man, who stood in the highest credit for learning and piety, and was considered in some respects the main ornament of the place to which he belonged ; but who, unfortunately for himself, was suspected of being more Reformed than Lutheran in his view of the Lord's Supper. It was not the least consideration in his prejudice, that

he was known to be in regular correspondence with Melancthon, as one of his most intimate and confidential friends. The movement against him was commenced in 1555, by *John Timann*, one of his colleagues in the ministry of Bremen, who now came forward with great zeal to the assistance of Westphal, in his crusade against heresy. The other preachers were after some time fully engaged also in the process of persecution. Every effort was made to bring the man into discredit with the magistracy and the people, as an enemy of the orthodox Lutheran faith. The pulpits, in the end, were made to ring with long loud reproaches, hurled upon his head. For years, conspiracy and intrigue knew no rest. Timann himself died in the midst of the controversy; but his mantle fell upon others, who showed themselves well able to supply his place. Other cities and states, Hamburg, Lubeck, Lunenberg, Saxony, Mecklenburg, Wirtemberg, Denmark, were secretly engaged to interpose their solemn mediation in the case, as though the whole Lutheran world were brought into reproach and peril by the spiritual pestilence so long harbored in the bosom of Bremen. In the end, Hardenberg saw himself compelled to retire. The controversy however was still continued, and came to a more favorable result ultimately than might have been expected. It lasted altogether thirteen years, holding the city of Bremen in violent disturbance the whole time.

In close connection with the religious struggle of Bremen, so far as its interior history was concerned, stands the religious revolution of the Palatinate, which

fell like a thunderbolt on the ears of Lutheran Germany, while that struggle was still in progress. We have seen already, that the elements of distraction were at work here also during the reign of Otho-Henry; and we may now understand more fully, the true ground of this difficulty, as well as its proper constitution and character. It was no isolated or accidental commotion that had thus begun to agitate the life of the Palatinate. It was the result simply of that more general agitation, with which all Germany at this time was coming to be convulsed spiritually to its very centre. The same forces which were at violent issue in Bremen, and throughout the empire, were now revealing themselves in the same form in the Palatinate also, to resolve their appointed problem. With the accession of Frederick the Pious, this problem came to a decision, whose glorious monument is still with us in the Heidelberg Catechism. To the history of its origin and formation, we are now prepared to direct our attention.

## III. OCCASION OF THE CATECHISM.

*Hesshuss and Klebiz. Response of Melancthon. The Palatinate becomes Reformed. General emotion in Germany. John Brentz in Wirtemberg. Stuttgard Synod and Confession. Violent controversy. Lutheran principle fully developed.*

One of the most violent, unsettled spirits of this turbulent time, was *Tilemann Hesshuss;* rendered memorable, if by nothing else, at least by the merciless castigation inflicted upon him by Calvin, in his last tract on the Lord's Supper. He was a man of inordinate ambition, fond of money, constitutionally intolerant and overbearing; and withal, whether by conviction or accident, a perfect zealot in the cause of Lutheran orthodoxy. In the year 1558, he was appointed by Otho-Henry, first professor of theology in the university of Heidelberg, and general superintendent of all the churches in the Palatinate. Six months however had not elapsed, before he had made himself here, as in all places where he had lived before, an object of very general dislike. In particular, he was drawn into strong collision with one *William Klebiz*, who occupied the situation of a deacon at the time in Heidelberg; a man also, it would seem, of most unclerical temper, and but little inclined to maintain friendly relations with the new superintendent. It soon came between them to an open, most violent rupture; in which the sacramental question was made the prominent subject

of quarrel. Hesshuss charged Klebiz with heresy, as openly favoring the Calvinistic view of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper, rather than the strict Lutheran. The point of his apostacy was found mainly in this, that he affirmed the participation of Christ's body in the Supper to be by faith only, and not by the mouth. Hesshuss grew savage in his denunciations; the more so probably, as he could not fail to see that the reigning influence around him was on the side of his adversary, and not with himself. In stormful style, sabbath after sabbath, he poured forth his indignation from the pulpit, upon the new Arius, as he styled him, (or "Zuinglian devil,") who had made his appearance in the Heidelberg church; not sparing, at the same time, the university and the authorities of the city, for their supine indifference to the portentous evil, that was threatening in their very midst the whole Palatinate with ruin. Klebiz returned violence for violence. The whole city was thrown into commotion.

It was in the midst of this tempestuous outbreak, that Frederick III. succeeded to the electorate. The moderate measures he employed, in the first place, to allay the strife, proved unavailing. Hesshuss set his authority at defiance; played the pope, in truly frantic style; and proceeded in the end to thunder from the pulpit a sentence, first of suspension, and then of excommunication, against the deacon Klebiz; solemnly laying it on the conscience of the civil government, to expel him from the city and state, under pain of the most heavy divine judgments upon the whole land. The elector interposed again, enjoining on both parties mutual for-

bearance and silence, till such time as a proper Synod might be convened to examine the whole question. The very next time that Hesshuss appeared in his pulpit, he began to rave again in his old style. The elector himself came in for a share of his abuse, as an apostate from the true faith of the Augsburg Confession. Klebiz felt himself absolved from the duty of silence also, by this example of his adversary; and in this way, things were at once as bad as before.

In these circumstances, the elector found it necessary to resort to more vigorous measures. Without farther process, Hesshuss and Klebiz were both dismissed from office, on one day; and by this means, the public quiet was once more restored.

Frederick was now made to feel the importance of having the subject of this controversy brought to some such settlement, in his dominions, as might preserve the peace of the country in time to come. He conceived the design accordingly of establishing a rule of faith for the Palatinate, that should reduce its conflicting views to some common measure, to which all might be required subsequently to conform. The Augsburg Confession, it was plain, could not satisfy the wants of the case. He had subscribed it himself indeed in good faith; and it was the established Confession of the land. But it was not so, in the sense which was put upon it by the rigid party, now making so much noise in the Lutheran Church. If this was to be taken as its true construction, the elector felt that he belonged inwardly himself to a different creed, and that the same thing was true also of the Palatinate generally. It was

not difficult for him then of course, to make up his mind in general, with regard to the ecclesiastical position which it would be proper to assume, in his new formulary of faith.

To sustain himself however in the movement which he had in view, he deemed it proper to write to Melancthon in the first place, for his judgment in relation to the difficulty with which he was called to deal; knowing well enough beforehand the state of mind in which he stood at this time to the theological agitations generally, with which he was surrounded. This drew forth the celebrated *response* of Melancthon; which became public soon after, when he had himself descended to the grave, and served to involve his memory in no small reproach, with the stiff party to whose views it was found to be opposed. It approved the elector's course, in silencing the sacramental controversy, and also his purpose of excluding strife by establishing some common formula in the case, to which all should be required to submit; while at the same time it very decidedly condemned the use of any such terms for this purpose, as were pressed upon the Church by Hesshuss and men of the same stamp. Such a judgment coming from such a quarter, was of great account for Frederick and his divines, in the posture in which they now stood. Melancthon did not design of course to recommend a a formal transition to the Reformed Church; and had he anticipated any such movement on the part of the Palatinate, we may well suppose that his response would have been expressed in more guarded terms. As it was however, it virtually justified this step. For it

involved a full sanction of the proper Reformed or Calvinistic doctrine, and condemned the Lutheranism of such men as Westphal and Hesshuss as extravagant and extreme; while at the same time, this very form of Lutheranism was successfully asserting in fact its title to be considered the true and legitimate orthodoxy of the Church. In declining its authority then, it was altogether reasonable that the Church of the Palatinate should at once pass over to the other confession. To this issue accordingly it now came.

The event could not fail, of course, to create the most earnest attention. Among others, the son-in-law of the elector, duke John Frederick of Saxony, was much disturbed and troubled at the tidings. He immediately took a journey to Heidelberg, carrying along with him, in his orthodox zeal, two of his most expert theologians, *Morlin* and *Stossel*, to rescue his relative, if possible, from the dangerous snare of Calvinism, into which he had so unhappily fallen. For this purpose a public disputation was proposed, in the spirit of the age, to be held between the two theologians just mentioned, and any the elector might see fit to nominate for the defence of his own cause. The proposal was readily accepted; and a disputation followed accordingly, which was continued for five full days, in the presence of the two princes. It was held in the month of June, 1560. The Calvinistic cause was maintained by *Peter Boc-quin*, one of the most distinguished theologians connected at the time with the Heidelberg university. The whole debate seems to have been occupied exclusively with the *mode* of the eucharistic presence; the divines

of John Frederick contending for the high Lutheran doctrine, while *Bocquin* asserted the Calvinistic theory, "that the true substance of the true body" of Christ is received indeed in the sacrament, but only by believers through faith, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and not in a corporeal way through the mouth.

The result of the whole disputation was, that the elector found himself only more confirmed than before, in his resolution to establish the Reformed doctrine in the Palatinate.

Two other princes, John Frederick of Gotha and duke Christopher of Wirtemberg, the first another son by marriage and the last his own god-father, addressed him also on the subject, with letters of earnest remonstrance. But all had no effect, in the way of unsettling his purpose. His replies, full of attractive simplicity, still remain as noble monuments of the pious spirit that governed him in this whole transaction. He acted throughout, not from passion or self-will, but in obedience to what he himself at least believed to be the truth.

There was no violent revolution, in the change which now took place in the Palatinate. The case did not require this; for the reigning spirit of the university, as well as of the Church in general, was already more Reformed than Lutheran. Here and there indeed a minister might be found, who was disposed to act the zealot on the Lutheran side. Such naturally were obliged in the end to relinquish their places; not directly for their faith itself, but because they were not willing to submit silently to the order of things with

which they were surrounded. Some changes too were introduced into the public worship; such as the removal of altars and organs at least from a part of the churches, the substitution of the breaking of bread for the wafer, &c.; the object of which was undoubtedly to transfer the religious associations of the people, as much as possible, from the one communion to the other, that they might be led thus to a more full correspondence with the Reformed Church in doctrine also as well as rites. A still more efficient and direct policy towards this end, was exhibited in the introduction of decided Calvinistic teachers into the university. All new appointments were of this kind. Among them we find the names of *Caspar Olevianus* and *Zacharias Ursinus*, whose agency soon after became so prominent in the formation of the Catechism; the great work, in which finally this whole revolution may be said to have become complete.

Meanwhile all Germany was like a forest on fire. It is impossible to describe the sensation, that was produced throughout the whole Lutheran world by the now manifest defection of the Palatinate. To the view of thousands it seemed a case of the most horrible apostacy, like the fall of Lucifer from heaven. Hesshuss on his flight from Heidelberg, having found a more congenial element in which to breathe at Bremen, had immediately raised the most doleful cry of the elector's treason to the Augsburg Confession; which was loudly re-echoed from all sides by the Westphals, Wigands and Morlins of Lower Saxony, before it was dreamed that matters might become still so much worse. When now

at last the full truth came, the effect was absolutely overwhelming. At first, for a short time, men seemed to pause, as though they had been fairly stunned into silence. But it was only, that the strife which was already at work might collect itself into more intense force, to roll forward afterwards upon its stormful career more stormfully than before.

Parallel with the movement in the Palatinate from the start, and in the way of reaction to it no doubt in some measure, another most important movement had taken place in the neighboring province of Wirtemberg; which it is necessary to notice here, as entering largely into this tumultuating drama. The man who led the way in it was JOHN BRENTZ, the principal theologian of Wirtemberg, and one of the few survivors of the original band of reformers. His whole character gave him immense weight, with the new generation that had come forward upon the stage; and on the sacramental question particularly, he was allowed to be entitled to pre-eminent respect, as one who had stood nobly by the side of Luther himself, through the whole course of the first war with the Helvetic divines. During twenty years he had kept silence, faithful to the truce of Wittemberg, and piously intent on the general peace of the Church. He had not changed his former views; he was Lutheran still to the very core; but he had learned to exercise more moderation towards those, who were not able to go as far in this direction as himself. Now however his moderation was found once more to give way. When Hesshuss first raised the war whoop, Brentz had probably as little inclination as his friend, the mild and gentle

Melancthon, to take part in the renewal of hostilities; although he shared no doubt in the offence, that had been taken by many with the open alliance particularly, into which Calvin had shortly before entered with the Swiss divines in the famous *Consensus* of Zurich. As the controversy proceeded, new occasions of provocation of course came in his way, to which he could not be insensible. But it was the course of things in the Palatinate, which at length fairly roused his zeal into full action. He might endure Calvinism on its own field; but it was too much, that it should pretend to supplant the holy faith of Luther, in the German Church itself. The Palatinate too was close at hand; and he had himself been widely honored among its churches; his own catechism being in fact in use with them extensively as a text book of religious instruction. We need not wonder then, that he beheld with strong emotion the change which was taking place, and felt himself called upon to oppose it with a strenuous counter movement in his own quarter. If Calvinism prevail in the Palatinate, Wirtemberg must carry out Lutheranism in return to its full consequence and force. Only in this form, might justice be done to it now in the eyes of the world. There must be an ecclesiastical synod convened, and a new formula of faith established, that should run the limits of the system so clearly, as to leave no room for equivocation or mistake. In the middle of September, 1559, Hesshuss was driven from Heidelberg. In December following, the superintendents and theologians of the province of Wirtemberg were called to meet in solemn synod at Stuttgard; for the purpose of framing, or adopt-

ing rather from the hand of Brentz, the new symbol that should assert and guard thenceforward the orthodoxy of the land. It was one of the most startling and pregnant events of the time.

By this Stuttgard confession, the peculiar distinctions of high Lutheranism, as distinguished not simply from the Zuinglian, but also from the Calvinistic, theory of the sacraments, were formally proclaimed as the true faith of the Church. In particular, the full consequence of the system, the *ubiquity* of Christ's body, as a result of the so called "*communicatio idiomatum*," was now for the first time unshrinkingly exhibited as a necessary part of the Lutheran creed. It was in fact the first step taken towards the celebrated "Form of Concord," in which fifteen years later, through storm-rocked seas, the development of Lutheranism became complete for the empire at large.

As a matter of course the bold demonstration, was followed with immense excitement. It constituted an epoch in the sacramental war. The whole controversy acquired new importance, from the imposing character of the actors here brought into view, with such a man as Brentz at their head, as well as from the desperate, uncompromising spirit of the action itself. It was a broad affront offered to the whole Reformed Church. It struck directly at the position of a large and respectable party in the Lutheran Church itself, who either held the Calvinistic theory themselves, or at least considered it perfectly compatible with good Lutheranism; and who deprecated of course all action that should tend to bring in a more narrow rule of orthodoxy. Chief

among these stood the venerable author of the Augsburg Confession himself, still living at Wittemberg. The Stuttgard confession cut off all room for neutrality, and emboldened the rigid party in the Church to lay out all their strength, from this time onward, for the erection of the same severe test in all parts of the land.

Polemical tracts, in the rough style of the age, full of theological acrimony and gall, flew fast and thick on all sides. Melancthon slept in Jesus, just soon enough to be spared the necessity of taking part in the strife. His colleagues in Wittemberg were in due time fairly overwhelmed by its surging billows. Geneva and Zurich both came actively forward, in their own defence. Calvin's last tract was against Hesshuss. In the close of it, he curiously transfers the management of the "incorrigible bull" to his friend and colleague Beza. Hesshuss was honored accordingly with two tracts from this last; one entitled "*Cyclops or Creophagia*," the other "*Sophista or The Syllogizing Ass.*" Bullinger was at the same time prominent upon the field. Also Bocquin and Ursinus of Heidelberg. On the other side, Hesshuss of course was not idle; nor were active and able pens wanting in support of the same cause. Among them all however there was none more active, than that wielded by Brentz himself. The aged reformer seemed to renew his youth, in the zeal with which he contended for the "*ubiquity*," against all opposers far and near. He was the centre of the spiritual storm.

It was in the midst of all this commotion, while the two confessional tendencies, which had previously

been joined together in the Lutheran Church, were coming to their necessary rupture, by the evolution of the true Lutheran principle out to its last consequence, that the Heidelberg Catechism came to its birth. It forms, in this view, the proper historical counterpart of the Stuttgard Confession. This last, the *Form of Concord* in embryo, sundered the proper Lutheran consciousness from all foreign mixture; while the Calvinistic tendency was conducted also to its corresponding public expression, *beyond* the pale of the Lutheran Church entirely, in the Heidelberg Catechism.

## IV. FORMATION OF THE CATECHISM.

*The Elector Frederick. Caspar Olevianus. Zacharias Ursinus. Provincial Synod. First editions. Established use.*

The Catechism of the Palatinate is to be ascribed, in the first place, to the pious zeal of the elector Frederick. The reasons by which he was moved to provide such a formulary for the usé of the Church in his dominions, are given by himself in a general way, in a preface which accompained its original publication. It is the duty of princes, he says, not only to consult for the quiet and prosperity of their people, by wise regulations in regard to their common social and political relations, but especially to take measures for imbuing them with a proper knowledge of Almighty God, and a wholesome respect for his word, which is the only ground of all virtue in a community; thus having an eye to the eternal, no less than to the temporal welfare, of all who may be under his care. His predecessors of happy memory had endeavored by various christian ordinances and institutions to secure this end; but as yet no sufficient result had been reached, in the way of meeting the wants of the land as a whole. Hence he felt himself called upon, not simply to renew former measures, but to go beyond all that had been previously done, for the promotion of religious knowledge. The youth of his land, he goes on to say, might be said especially to suffer, as it regarded their religious train-

ing, both in the schools and in the parish churches; being in some cases altogether neglected, and in other cases taught irregularly from various catechisms according to the free fancy of their teachers, and with no established method; the result of which was much confusion and deficiency of sound views. On this account, he had considered it one of the first duties he owed to the Church and State, as the ruler of his people, to correct the evil of such wrong and insufficient instruction by providing, with the assistance of his whole theological faculty, and other distinguished divines, a suitable summary of the christian doctrines; which was now published, both in the German and Latin tongues, not only for the use of the young in schools and churches, but as a directory also for all concerned in the business of religious instruction.

Such a formulary was in fact indispensable, to complete and establish under a properly solid form, the religious revolution of the Palatinate. The circumstances of the country moreover required, that the work should spring from its own bosom, and not be derived to it from abroad. The case called for a peculiar composition. In becoming Reformed, the Church of the Palatinate was still German. There was a large amount of Lutheran feeling, along with the properly Calvinistic, in her communion; with some mixture too of Zuinglianism, it would seem, as an interest distinct from both. The new Catechism must go as far as possible, in mediating between these different systems. It must be irenical, conciliatory, catholic.

Having resolved on the introduction of such a new symbolical book, Frederick's next care was to select suitable persons, for the deeply responsible task of its composition. His choice however was soon made, and if we may judge from the result, with great wisdom. It fell on Caspar Olevianus and Zacharias Ursinus. They were both comparatively young, the first but twenty six, the other only twenty eight years of age; which might seem to indicate a want of ripeness for such a service as this. But the period was one that gave birth to strong minds, and brought them early to maturity. Melancthon published his Greek Grammar, when he was but sixteen years old; and in his seventeenth year, read lectures on the classics and the philosophy of Aristotle. From the age of twenty one, as professor at Wittemberg, he stood conspicuous to the eyes of all Europe, as one of the most accomplished scholars of the time, with hundreds of admiring pupils, gathered from every civilized land, sitting at his feet and hanging upon his lips. In his thirty third year, he was held by all to be the fittest man living to prepare a statement of the evangelical faith, for the memorable diet of Augsburg; by which means he became the father of the Augsburg Confession. But it was nearly ten years before this, that he gave to Europe the first edition of his *Loci Communes*, the primary text-book in divinity for the whole Lutheran Church. Calvin too was only twenty six years of age, when he surprised the world with his *Institutes*, before whose towering greatness the entire Reformed Church has since continued to bow with the deepest respect. Ursinus and Olevianus

are less conspicuous names, it is true; but they were worthy notwithstanding, of the age to which Melancthon and Calvin belonged. At the time now under contemplation, they stood in the first rank of Protestant theologians, and were counted an ornament to the university of Heidelberg, into whose service they had been not long before called.

*Olevianus* was the son of a respectable baker at Treves, the city of the "Holy Coat." In his fourteenth year he was sent to Paris, to complete his education. Here he studied law. But God intended him for the Church, and by a solemn dispensation of his providence accordingly constrained him to change the whole plan of his life. He had gone to Bourges; and while there was returning one day from a walk, in company with two friends, one of them a son of the palatine, Frederick III. About to cross the Loire, some drunken students forced themselves into the same boat with them for the passage. By their wild folly, the boat was upset. The young prince, with others, found a watery grave. Olevianus, while endeavoring to save his friends, was brought into imminent peril of losing his own life. Out of these depths, his serious spirit inwardly cried unto God; and by a solemn vow, he engaged, if spared, to renounce the law, and devote himself to the work of preaching the gospel in his native city. The Lord heard, and delivered him out of his distress. He was already joined in spirit with the persecuted Huguenots; and he now addressed himself actively to the study in particular of the theological writings of Calvin. His admiration of this great theo-

logian, led him afterwards to Geneva, to enjoy his oral instructions. Here he formed an intimate friendship with *Theodore Beza*, which continued unbroken to the end of his life. While in Switzerland, he made the acquaintance also of that indefatigable enemy of the priests, *William Farel;* who, very characteristically, made him give his hand in the way of pledge, that he would not fail soon to go back and preach Christ in the city of his birth. True to this promise and his former vow, he commenced his ministry in Treves early in the year 1559. The gospel, here as elsewhere, soon began to display its power. Treves seemed almost ready to throw itself into the arms of the Reformation. This led to interference on the part of the reigning authority, and finally to no small popular commotion. Olevianus, with others, was cast into prison; from which, at the end of ten weeks, he was set free, under the condition of a heavy fine and immediate banishment from the city. Thus ended the work of the Reformation at Treves. Olevianus was now welcomed to a new sphere of labor in Heidelberg. In the year 1561, he received an appointment as professor of theology in the Heidelberg university, and not long after as court preacher also in one of the principal churches of the city.

*Ursinus** was a native of Bresslau, in Silesia. At

*His proper family name was *Beer*, (Bear,) which according to the fashion of the learned world in that period was exchanged for the more sonorous corresponding Latin title Ursinus. So the name Olevianus also is a similar substitute for the proper corresponding German name of this divine.

the age of sixteen he had been sent to Wittemberg; where he spent seven years in the character of a student, helping himself during a part of the time by private teaching; for his means were slender. During this period, he made great acquirements, in classical literature, philosophy and theology. He was considered besides quite a master of poetry; and composed himself various productions in Latin and Greek verse, which were much admired. Melancthon, the ornament of the university, conceived a very high regard for his abilities and attainments, and continued on terms of intimate personal friendship with him to the end of his life. This itself forms as high a recommendation of the character of Ursinus, as we could well have in the circumstances. In the year 1557, he accompanied Melancthon to the conference at Worms; after which he visited Geneva and Paris. On his return to Wittemberg, he received a call from the magistracy of his native city to the rectorship of its principal school, the Elizabethan gymnasium. Here his services gave great satisfaction. But the clergy of the place soon raised an alarm with regard to his orthodoxy. As in the case of Hardenberg at Bremen, so here, one great ground of suspicion was Melancthon's friendship and favor. It seemed to be taken for granted by the zealots for high Lutheranism, that no one could be in close intimacy with Melancthon, who was not at bottom a Crypto-Calvinist. Ursinus published a small tract, in his own justification; but it did not allay the spirit of persecution. He was still held up to reproach, as a *Sacramentarian*. Finally he resolved to withdraw. The magis-

tracy would gladly have retained him, in spite of all the clamor of his enemies. But he had an aversion to all strife and commotion; and with an honorable dismission, he retired accordingly, a voluntary martyr to the holy cause of peace, to seek a more quiet sphere of action in some different quarter. As Melancthon was now dead, he betook himself to Zurich. Here soon after he was honored with a call from Heidelberg; where he became settled in consequence, A. D. 1561, as theological professor in the university, and principal in particular of the divinity school belonging to it, under the title "Collegium Sapientiae." He is represented as a man of much modesty; quiet, though ardent at the same time, and even passionate, in his natural spirit; uncommonly assiduous and laborious in the prosecution of his proper work. He had no talent for preaching; but as an academic lecturer, he was exceedingly popular; being distinguished for his vivacity, fulness of learning, and happy power of communication.*

These were the men, on whom Frederick devolved the trust of preparing his new formulary of religious instruction. Their commission was, to form a catechism that should suit the wants of the Palatinate. It must represent the Reformed faith, and yet be true at

*With all his learning, he made it a point to be very cautious in his judgments; and was not ashamed to adopt the rule that questions put to him in the lecture room should not be answered ordinarily till the following day. Over the door of his study, he is said to have had in full view the inscription: "Amice, quisquis huc venis, aut agito paucis, aut abi, aut me laborantem adjuva." That is: "Friend, entering here, be short, or go away, or else assist me in my work."

the same time to the general spirit of the Augsburg Confession. The elector had signed this Confession only the year before; and it was not in his heart now to erect within his dominions a standard, that might be considered hostile to its true substance. The catechism must be such a system, as Melancthon if living might join with Calvin to subscribe; in testimony of their common faith.

The work is to be considered strictly the joint production of the two men, with whose names it thus stands associated. The conception or plan of it, is to be referred mainly, it would seem, to Olevianus; though no doubt, the judgment of his colleague was duly consulted also in the case; while both took part together in settling the material that should enter into its composition. The task of reducing the whole to actual form, was made to fall exclusively on Ursinus. This was wise. Two different pens could not have been employed upon the work, with advantage. A catechism, creed, liturgy, to be of true force, must spring indeed from the religious life of many. As an isolated birth of the closet, it can have no power. But it is just as true, on the other hand, that as the product of a general life, no such work can ever spring properly, in the last instance, from more than a single author. Only where the general life is carried to some good extent in the consciousness of some one man, who is thus capable of acting as its organ, can the requisitions of the case be fully met. The creed, like a poem, should be all spiritually cast from the living mould of the same mind. Only so can it exhibit, with proper

unity and universality combined, the character of a full, symmetrical, organic whole.

The elector is said to have taken an active interest personally in the whole progress of the work, even assisting occasionally in the way of suggestion or advice; so near did it lie to his heart. The circumstance deserves notice, not of course as being of any account to the work itself, but as it serves to illustrate the religious character of the prince.

In the course of the same year, the Catechism was completed and placed in the elector's hands. The next step was to clothe it with suitable ecclesiastical authority and force. For this purpose, he immediately convoked at Heidelberg a synod of the superintendents and principal pastors of the entire Palatinate, to whom the work was submitted for examination and review. This was done in several successive sittings; at the close of which, the body with one voice declared itself, not simply satisfied, but delighted with the accuracy, force and comprehensiveness, of the whole production, as a formulary of faith, and begged that it might be adopted and made public as such without delay. In conformity with this recommendation, it was shortly after issued from the press, as the Catechism to be used for religious instruction in all the churches and schools of the Palatinate. This was in the year 1563. Along with the German original, appeared at the same time a Latin translation, made also by authority, as a text-book of divinity for the higher institutions. As before intimated, the work was introduced, in the way of preface, by a sort of special proclamation under the

hand of the elector himself. As many as four editions of it seem to have been published, from the same press, in the course of one year ; so wide and rapid was the circulation, to which it came at once in the bounds of the Palatinate.

One remarkable distinction characterized the first edition, as compared with all which have been published since. The 80th Question, in which the Roman mass is denounced as an "accursed idolatry," was not suffered to make its appearance. In the second edition, it is found in its place, only the *accursed idolatry* is still suppressed. Finally however, as in this same year the decrees of the Council of Trent came out anathematising all who would not own the mass to be divine, the elector took pains to have the Question restored in full to the form in which it was originally composed ; while the previous text was allowed to go out of use as defective and incorrect. This gave rise subsequently to no small controversy and reproach.

In these first editions, the questions and answers follow each other in unbroken succession, without division or number. The biblical proof passages are indicated in the margin, by a reference simply to the *chapters* in which they occur, as though the verse were of no account. It was not till ten years later, that this inconvenience was removed, by the introduction of proper distinctions, and more full references. These appear in the edition of 1573, which contains also the Liturgy of the Church, or its formulary of public services and prayers. In this edition also, the questions are found distributed into fifty two sections, or *Sundays*,

according to the order which has since prevailed, for the use of the pulpit ; for it was required, that every minister should go over the whole Catechism every year, by preaching once upon it on each Lord's day. A similar arrangement is presented to us in the case also of Calvin's Catechism. Catechetical instruction was a business, with which the Church in these days went earnestly to work. The family, the common school, the weekly pulpit, the gymnasium, and the university, were all expected and required, in the Palatinate, to co-operate continually, in carrying out with efficiency the great design of the Heidelberg Catechism.

To assist in the accomplishment of the general object, a *Shorter Catechism* was subsequently prepared and published, for the use of plain people and children, for whom the larger work was too full and not sufficiently easy of comprehension. This was not a new formulary, properly speaking, and was not intended of course to supplant in any measure the authority of the other. On the contrary, it was nothing more than a compend of the larger catechism itself, exhibiting always the same doctrines, and to a great extent also in the same words.

The Catechism was thus fully enthroned in the Palatinate of the Rhine, as the rule and measure of the public faith. It was made the basis of theological instruction, in the university. A regular system of catechisation was established in all the churches. The afternoon of every Lord's day was devoted to this service, which was made to include grown persons as well as children. Fifty years after this, we find from

the report made at the Synod of Dort, that it comprehended in fact three distinct courses of instruction; the first for children, the second for youth, and the third for adults of every age.

## V. WAR AGAINST THE CATECHISM.

*Its pacific spirit. Angry reception by Romanists and Lutherans. Theological assaults. Remonstrance of princes. Diet of Augsburg. Noble stand taken by Frederick. Triumph. His piety and happy death.*

The Heidelberg Catechism was designed, as we have already seen, to serve the cause of union and peace. Towards Rome of course it could not turn a friendly aspect; although if we leave out of view the 80th Question, and one or two others polemically pointed in the same direction, it must be allowed to breathe a tone of great moderation even on this side. But with the Lutheran Church, it seemed carefully to avoid all direct controversy. Its reigning character here was apologetic and conciliatory. It sought, in the first place, by a fair and true representation of its own system, to vindicate the Church in whose name it appeared, from the aspersions that were plentifully cast upon it from abroad. It aimed, in the second place, to do this in such a way, that as little offence as possible should be given to the friends of the Augsburg Confession. As a clear statement of the Reformed faith, it could not fail of course to come into occasional collision with the faith of Luther, at least in a silent and negative way. But it could not be charged with a polemical intention, in any such case. When we examine the Catechism, we find it to be wonderfully free, from the spirit of

controversy, as well as from its form. From beginning to end, it is occupied with what is positive in truth; rather than with its negative aspects and relations. Nothing can well be more beautiful or dignified indeed, than the straight-forward simplicity and earnestness, with which truth after truth is presented, as it were for its own sake simply, without any sinister, unnecessary reference to the opinions of others. This is truly remarkable, when we consider the particular period in which it appeared, and the tone that had come to characterize too generally at the time the thinking and speaking of the different parties in the Protestant world. No parade whatever is made of the points of difference between the Reformed and Lutheran Churches; no polemic thrusts at the weak or exposed parts of the sister communion come into view.

Clearly it was not the object of the Catechism at all, to set forth the Reformed or Calvinistic system as such, in broad opposition to the Lutheran system as such; but simply to digest and embody in popular symbolical form what were considered to be the great leading principles of the evangelical faith, for the use of the churches in the Palatinate. That the work itself came in the end to a much wider use, was owing simply to its extraordinary merits. As there was still a considerable party in the Palatinate which favored the views of Luther, a disposition had been felt to make the new platform as broad and catholic in this direction, as might at all comport with its own distinctive scheme of doctrine. Among all symbolical books of the Reformed Church accordingly, the Heidelberg Catechism

is the one which has ever found the most favor with the friends and adherents of the Augsburg Confession. Candid and liberal Lutherans at least, have not refused it their praise. "I must confess," says one of the older writers of this denomination, "that leaving out of view the peculiar doctrines of Calvin contained in it, the Reformed are not without reason in their boast, that as Ursinus in his other writings excels almost all the rest of their theologians, so he has in the composition of this Catechism gone also beyond himself. The method, as it regards the three parts, is suited to the subject; the questions are well framed, and lucidly answered; the proof-texts subjoined are happily selected, and the whole arrangement such as to promote edification." A like favorable view of the work, has been taken by many others in the same communion.*

But notwithstanding all that has now been said, the Catechism was received far and wide, at the time of its appearance, as a loud declaration of war; and became at once the signal for an angry, violent onset, in the way of opposition and reproach, from all parts of the Lutheran Church. The high toned party which was now filling the whole empire with its alarm of heresy, could not be expected of course to tolerate patiently any religious formulary, that might fall short of its own rigorous measure of orthodoxy. From this quarter accordingly the Catechism was assaulted, more fiercely

*So Guerike, the zealous advocate of old Lutheranism in our own day: "Die durch viele Lehrweisheit, Wærme und Geschicklichkeit ausgezeichnete symbolische Schrift der deutschen Reformirten Kirche." *Kirchengesch.* II. p. 1125.

even than from the Church of Rome itself. Its very moderation seemed to magnify the front of its offence. Had there been more of the lion or tiger in its mien, and less of the lamb, its presence might have proved possibly less irritating to the polemical humor of the times. As it was, there was felt to be provocation in its very meekness. Its outward carriage was held to be deceitful and treacherous; and its heresy was counted all the worse, for being hard to find, and shy of coming to the light. The winds of strife were let loose upon it accordingly, from all points of the compass.

Not only the unity and quiet of the German Church, but the peace also of the German empire, seemed in the eyes of the high Lutheran party to be brought into jeopardy by the new confession. It was not only heresy in religion, but treason also in politics. Both the elector and his theologians found their faith severely tried, by the general outcry which was raised at their expense. But they were men of faith, and they stood the trial nobly and well.

In a very short time, the Catechism was attacked, in the way of formal review and censure, by different pens. Among others, as was naturally to be expected, Tilemann Hesshuss assailed it with open mouth, in his "*True Warning;*" which was allowed to pass however without the honor of an answer. A much more respectable adversary appeared, in the person of the celebrated *Matthias Flacius Illyricus:* a man of great learning, who seems however to have had his very being in the element of religious controversy.

His self-styled, "*Refutation of the Calvinistic Catechism of Olevianus*," was published in the year 1563.

Meanwhile the elector was taken solemnly to account, in a more private way, by several of his brother princes, who seemed to think the whole empire scandalized by his unorthodox conduct. Prince *Wolfgang* of Neuburg and margrave *Charles* of Baden, both felt themselves constrained to address him on the subject. A still more active concern was taken in the case by *Christopher*, duke of Wirtemberg, between whom and Frederick there had subsisted heretofore a more than common intimacy, based upon a general similarity of character and disposition. It was urged, that a special conference or debate should be held publicly, between the leading theologians of Wirtemberg and the Palatinate; for the purpose of bringing this whole difficulty, if possible, to a proper resolution and settlement. The Heidelberg divines were not in favor of the measure. They apprehended more evil from it than good. The elector however gave way to the pressure of the princes; and the conference was held accordingly, April 1564, in the convent at Maulbron.

Among the disputants from Heidelberg, were the professors Bocquin, Olevianus and Ursinus. On the other side, appeared Brentz, two of the Tubingen professors, and other distinguished divines. The burden of the debate however was thrown mainly upon Ursinus in the one case, and wholly upon *James Andreæ*, the great and good chancellor of the university of Tubingen, in the other. Two questions, it was agreed in the beginning, should be thoroughly discussed; first;

Is the body of Christ in all places ? and secondly : Must the declaration, *This is my body*, be understood literally as the words sound ? Five days long the patient princes, Christopher and Frederick, listened to a discussion on the *first* topic, which seemed at last as little at an end as when it started. On the sixth day however, it was judged proper to pass forward to the second point. But unfortunately, the parties soon found themselves back again to the old question ! The elector, in dismay, proposed now that the conference should break up in the middle, as never likely to come of itself to a natural conclusion. As usual, in cases of this sort, the whole occasion served only to add new fuel to the flame of controversy, as it raged before. Both parties of course claimed the victory. On both sides were published "true and full reports" of the debate ; in the case of which, each side charged the other with grievous misrepresentation. The colloquy itself became a subject of war.

As the Heidelberg Catechism was beyond all doubt the occasion, so to many it appeared to be now the culpable cause of all this commotion. The neighboring princes already mentioned came forward against it in form, with a joint epistle it would seem to the elector, pointing out its supposed errors, and severely reprehending its publication. This was forwarded by Frederick to Bullinger, of Zurich, who wrote a defence of the Catechism against the princely attack.

In the year 1565, came out the great "*Declaration and Confession of the Theologians of Tubingen on the Majesty of the Man Christ.*" Then a "*Solid*

*Refutation of the Sophisms and Cavils of the Wirtemberg Divines*, on the part of the Palatinate. Then Replies and Rejoinders, all round, as fast as one could well make room for another. It was hard of course, in such circumstances, to exercise toleration on either side. The authority of the Catechism was rigorously enforced in the Palatinate. In Wirtemberg, an order was published from the pulpits forbidding all persons to read a Calvinistic book!

Ursinus drew up in popular form an *Apology* for the Catechism, against the objections particularly of Matthias Flacius. He wrote also a tract in its defence, in reply to a *Censure* upon eighteen questions contained in it by Brentz and Andreæ. Both these apologies, appear joined with the Catechism itself in the Neustadt edition of 1595, which has always been highly prized on this account.

It began to be a question now, whether the Palatinate could remain politically included in the terms of the *Religious Peace*, by which, in the year 1555, the free exercise of their religion was secured to the Protestants of Germany, against the authority previously claimed over them by the Church of Rome. The protection of the empire had been pledged in this case, only to those who followed the Confession of Augsburg. Must not the elector Frederick then be held to have forfeited, by his present position, all right and title to be reckoned in this connection? Could he be allowed to claim in future, the privileges which it secured? Much talk was raised on this subject, in view especially of the imperial diet, which was expected to meet at Augsburg in

the year 1566. Counsel was taken against the elector in secret; and it was hoped by many, that some decisive political blow, would be made to fall at this time upon his head. Representations were made against him to the emperor; whose displeasure, once fairly roused, might cost him not only his kingdom but his life. Rumors of impending mischief surrounded him on all sides, which became the source of no small uneasiness to his friends, as well as of solemn reflection to himself. He endeavored, however, like David, to strengthen himself in the Lord his God.

So serious did the danger appear, that his brother, prince Richard of Simmeren, thought it necessary to dissuade him most earnestly from attending the diet at all. But he would not yield to this advice. His magnanimous soul is touchingly displayed, in the two letters, still extant, which he wrote to his brother on this occasion. He admitted that there might be cause for anxiety; but his trust was that his heavenly Father would make him an instrument of his own glorious power, if need be, for the confession of his name in these last days, not only in word but in deed also, before the holy Roman empire of the German nation. He would not presume indeed to compare himself with his honored relative, duke John Frederick, elector of Saxony,* now deceased; but the same God from

*Defeated and taken prisoner by the emperor Charles V. in the memorable battle of Muehlberg, April 24, 1547. He was condemned to death, and afterwards pardoned again; but robbed of his electoral dignity, he remained for five years a captive in the emperor's camp.

whom this noble witness derived his strength still lived, and could easily uphold him also, insignificant as as he was, even if it should come so far as to the shedding of blood: "an honor," he added, "for which, if my God and Father should so please to use me, I could never be sufficiently thankful in this world or the next."

In this spirit he went to the diet. It was soon manifest, that an active interest was at work in the body to his prejudice. Complaints were preferred against him by the papal ecclesiastics present; with whom too many of the Protestant princes seemed disposed to make common cause, in their zeal for the extirpation of the Calvinistic doctrine. Finally it came to a formal declaration against him in open council, with the requisition that he should change and set aside again, in virtue of the *Religious Peace*, all that he had admitted into his churches and schools under the seducing form of Calvinism, and in particular do away with his Catechism and other books containing Calvinistic error; otherwise his imperial Majesty must feel himself bound, to take the case into serious account. On this, the elector withdrew to the one side, as it were to collect his soul for the occasion; but soon returned again to his place, where one of his sons, the prince John Casimir was directed to bring him a bible. Thus prepared, he entered upon his defence.

Modestly but firmly, he replied to each complaint that had been urged against him in the diet. When he came to the main point, his alleged defection from the Augsburg Confession, he did not hesitate to remind the

emperor, that in matters of faith and conscience he could acknowledge but one Master, the Lord of lords and King of kings. Where the salvation of the soul was concerned, it was God only who could properly command or be obeyed. Still he was ready to give answer to his imperial majesty, as the case required. Calvin's books he had never read, and could not pretend of course to know precisely what Calvinism was. On the other hand, he had signed the Augsburg Confession at Naumburg, in common with a number of princes who were now present, and could easily testify to the fact; and he continued in the same faith still, as believing it to be grounded in the holy scriptures; nor did he believe that any one could convict him of having swerved from this profession, in any thing that he had done. As for his Catechism, it was all taken from the bible, and so well fortified with marginal proof-texts, that it had not yet been overthrown, and he had good hope never would be, in all time to come. If any one could show it wrong from the holy bible, which he now held in his hands, he was ready to hear him, great or small, friend or foe. Till this were done, he trusted in his majesty's gracious forbearance. Should this expectation be disappointed however, he said, in conclusion, he would still comfort himself in the sure promise of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, made to him as well as to all saints, that what he might lose for his name in this life should be restored to him a hundred fold in the next.

This bold and manly address made a deep impression upon the assembly. All were silent; only one of the

popish bishops murmured something about the 80th Question and the mass. But this received now no attention. Even Augustus of Saxony, who especially piqued himself on his Lutheran orthodoxy, was so moved by the elector's speech that he came up to him, and exclaimed, striking him on the shoulder : "Fritz, you are more pious than the whole of us !" A similar remark was made afterwards by the margrave of Baden, to some of the princes : "Why trouble the elector ? He has more piety than all of us together."

It was in fact a complete victory, over all the plans and expectations of his enemies. When the question was submitted in the end by the emperor, whether the elector of the Palatinate was to be regarded as an ally of the Augsburg Confession, the members of the diet, through the influence especially of the elector of Saxony, decreed an affirmative answer. He was held to be sound in the faith, according to the main substance of this standard ; and especially on the great cardinal article of justification. On the article of the Lord's Supper, he appeared to show indeed some variation from the Confession. But this was not of such a character, by any means, that it ought to work his exclusion from the terms of the "Religious Peace." The whole decision was highly honorable to the diet, though it gave much umbrage of course to the hot headed theologians, who hoped to see German Calvinism completely crushed in the person of the heroic Frederick.

The elector returned to Heidelberg, amidst the general joy of his people, safe and sound, on the Friday before Whitsuntide. On the evening before the sacred festival,

being present at the preparation for the communion, in the church of the Holy Ghost, he grasped Olevianus by the hand in the presence of the whole congregation, and exhorted him to continue steadfast in the faith. It was an affecting and impressive spectacle. The next day, he partook of the sacrament, in company with his son Casimir and the whole court.

The emperor Maximilian seems to have been favorably affected towards him, by the honest plainness of his behavior at the diet. We find them subsequently on the best terms with one another. In the year 1570, Frederick had the honor of entertaining his majesty as a guest in Heidelberg, on his way to Spire ; at which time much weighty business was discussed between them, that served to give the emperor a high opinion of the elector's uprightness and ability. As he was about to leave, his princely host presented him with a copy of the bible in the Spanish language, as that which the emperor liked best, begging him to accept it in token of his regard. It is the treasury of all wisdom, he said, by whose guidance only, emperors, kings and princes, can learn to govern well. Maximilian not only received the book kindly, but promised also to read it diligently.

The Reformed Church of the Palatinate had internal difficulties to encounter, as well as opposition from without. Much commotion and dissatisfaction arose, from the introduction of the Calvinistic system of order and discipline, as established at Geneva. Still worse was the disturbance created by the appearance of the anti-trinitarian heresy, within the bounds of the

Church. The poison of Arianism, proceeding originally from Italy, had already diffused itself extensively, in different directions, throughout Europe, in connection with the moral ferment of the Reformation. Finally it insinuated itself into the Palatinate. On the 15th of July, 1570, three ministers were cast into prison, as patrons of the heresy. *Adam Neuser*, pastor of St. Peter's church in Heidelberg, saved himself from a similar fate, only by flight. In the end, the most conspicuous offender, *John Sylvan*, superintendent of Ladenberg, after a long confinement, was publicly beheaded in the market place. Thus was the tragedy of Geneva re-enacted, in the streets of Heidelberg. It was the spirit of the age, in each case, that demanded the sacrifice.

The last four years of the elector's life, were characterized by comparative peace. To the end, he continued to show a noble zeal for the interests of the Church. His death, which took place on the 26th of October, 1576, in the sixty first year of his age, was marked by the same piety that distinguished his life. As he felt his end approaching, he said to those who stood around his bed: "I have lived here long enough for you and the Church; I am called now to a better life. I have done for the Church what I could; but my power has been small. He who possesses all power, and who has cared for his Church before I was born, still lives and reigns in heaven; and he will not forsake us. Neither will he allow the prayers and tears, which I have so often poured forth to God upon my knees in this chamber, for my successors and the

Church, to prove without fruit." Shortly before his dissolution, he had the 31st psalm and the 17th chapter of John's gospel, read to him by Tossanus, with prayer. He then sunk gently into the arms of death.

He left a will; in which was found, written with his own hand, his dying confession of faith. A document of so solemn a character, that it was afterwards printed both in Latin and German, and appended to the general Confession of the Church.

Altogether, the elector, Frederick the Third, was a great good man, and an extraordinary prince. Emphatically might he be styled a "nursing father" to the Reformed Church.

## VI. THE CATECHISM AT HOME.

*Relapse of the Palatinate to Lutheranism. Restoration under prince Casimir. Death of Olevianus and Ursinus. David Pareus. Thirty Years' War. Philip William. Decline of the Reformed Church in the Palatinate.* 80*th Question.*

With the death of the elector Frederick, the whole religious state of the Palatinate fell once more into disorder. He was succeeded in the electorate by his eldest son, *Louis;* whose previous relations in the Upper Palatinate had inspired him with a strong zeal for Lutheranism, in full opposition to the whole religious course of his father. Before his death, the old prince had sought an interview with his son; wishing to bring him under an engagement, if possible, to respect his views in regard to the Church, as expressed in his last will and testament. Louis thought proper to decline the interview, and showed no regard whatever subsequently to his father's directions. On the contrary, he made it his business, from the start, to turn all things into an entirely different train. The clergy together with the mayor and citizens of Heidelberg, addressed a petition to him, praying for liberty of conscience, and offering one of the churches for the particular use of those who belonged to his confession. His brother, duke Casimir, lent his intercession also, to sustain the request. But it answered no purpose; Louis declared that *his* conscience would not suffer him to receive the

petition. The following year, he came with his court to Heidelberg, dissolved the ecclesiastical council, dismissed the preachers, filled all places with Lutheran incumbents, caused a new church service to be introduced, and in one word changed the public religion into a wholly different aspect from all that it was before, The Heidelberg Catechism of course was set aside. The booksellers were forbidden indeed to sell any book whatever, in favor of the Reformed faith.

The more prominent theologians were soon compelled to leave their places; among whom were the authors of the Catechism, Olevianus and Ursinus.

The first, who had made himself particularly obnoxious to the new elector by his somewhat intemperate pulpit zeal, received a call not long afterwards, to Berleburg. Here he continued, in the service of the gospel, the remainder of his days. His death took took place, March 15, 1587, in the full triumph of the christian salvation.*

* "Here have I first learned aright," he said on his death bed, "what sin is, and how great is the majesty of God!"—On one occasion, he fell into a sort of trance or rapture of four hours; which he described afterwards as a state, in which the dew of heaven was made to descend upon him, not in drops, but in full overflowing showers, refreshing soul and body with inexpressible joy. As the comforting promises of God were read to him, he would say often: "Would that my home-return to the Lord might soon come; I long to depart and be with Christ!" Towards the end, one said to him: "You are doubtless, my brother, well assured of your salvation in Christ." He replied: "Perfectly sure!" laid his hand upon his breast, and quietly expired.

Various works from his pen were published after his death, consisting mainly of sermons and commentaries on

Ursinus found an honorable refuge with the prince Casimir, second son of the late elector, who exercised a small sovereignty of his own, at Neustadt, and made it his business to succor and encourage there, as much as he could, the cause now persecuted by his Lutheran brother. The distinguished divine was constituted professor of theology in the Neustadt gymnasium; which the prince now proposed to raise to the character of something like a substitute for what the Heidelberg university had been previously for the Reformed Church.

He was soon furnished with an opportunity of making his institution still more important, as an asylum for letters and religion. In the year 1580, Louis signed the Form of Concord, and proceeded immediately to enforce its authority in his dominions. With the exception of a single man, all the professors in the university of Heidelberg refused to accept the new symbol, and so of course lost their places. Nearly all the students withdrew at the same time. The university was in fact dissolved; though it was soon resuscitated again with Lutheran faculties. Prince Casimir received

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parts of the bible. His friend, Theodore Beza, honored his memory with a Latin poem, in his usual elegant style, which begins:

"Eheu, quibus suspiriis,
Eheu, quibus te lacrymis,
OLEVIANE, planxero?
Nam dotibus pares tuis,
Doloribus pares meis,
Questus modosque flebiles
Non pectus hoc suggesserit,
Non istud os effuderit." &c.

into his college, such of the dismissed professors as were not provided for elsewhere. With such names as *Ursinus*, *Jerome Zanchius*, *Francis Junius*, *Daniel Tossanus*, *John Piscator*, in its theological faculty, and others of the like order in the other departments, the *Casimirianum*, as the school was now styled, acquired at once a very respectable standing. Here Ursinus continued to labor, true to the faith of his own dishonored Catechism, till the day of his death.

The triumph of Lutheranism in the Palatinate, proved in the end to be short. Before the plan could be fully executed, by which it was proposed to extend the revolution of the capital throughout the province, prince Louis died, in the midst of his days; and at once the whole face of things was brought to assume again a new aspect. His son, the proper heir to his power, was still a minor, and it devolved accordingly on his uncle, the duke John Casimir, to act as his guardian, and administer the government in his name. He entered upon this office with as little respect for the views and wishes of his deceased brother, as he himself had shown eight years before for the views and wishes of their common father. The Reformed faith was once more restored to honor. Casimir made some effort indeed at first to harmonize and unite the two conflicting confessions; but not being able to succeed in this, he took measures gradually to remove from all places of trust the incumbents appointed by his brother, and to fill them again with appointments from the Reformed Church. As far as possible, the old professors were once more restored to the university. The Casimiria-

num of Neustadt saw itself shorn by degrees of its transient glory. The Form of Concord sunk into disgrace; while its rival standard, the Heidelberg Catechism, rose gloriously into view again as the ecclesiastical banner of the Palatinate. In a short time, the whole order of the Church was restored, as it had stood at the death of Frederick the Pious.

But there was one among the banished theologians of Neustadt, who did *not* return at this time with his colleagues, to the scene of his former labors. The author of the Catechism himself, the learned and pious Ursinus, was not permitted to behold the triumph to which it was now advanced. He died, on the 6th of March 1583, the very year in which prince Casimir came into power. The event took place in the 59th year of his age.

He had written a number of theological treatises, suited to the wants of the time; among the rest a special dissertation entitled the "True Doctrine of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, faithfully expounded from the principles and sense of the divine Scriptures, the ancient and orthodox Church, and also of the Augsburg confession." This was published originally, in the name of the whole theological faculty of Heidelberg. His works were issued collectively, some time after his death, in three folio volumes, by his friend and disciple *David Pareus*.

We are indebted to the same faithful and competent hand for another important service, in this case. As long as Ursinus continued at Heidelberg, he had been in the habit of reading regularly lectures on the Catechism,

going over the whole of it in this way during the course of each year. Notes of these lectures were taken down by the students, which were allowed afterwards in several cases to appear in print. As much injustice was done to him by the defective character of these publications, David Pareus was called upon to revise the whole, and put the work into a form that should be more faithful to the name and spirit of his illustrious preceptor. This he undertook accordingly, and accomplished with great success. The work appeared first in the year 1591, at Heidelberg, in four parts, each furnished with a separate preface by Pareus; since which time it has gone through numerous editions, in different countries. The Heidelberg Catechism has been honored with an almost countless number of commentaries of later date; but this first one, derived from Ursinus through David Pareus, has been generally allowed to be the best that has been written. As he was himself the author of the Catechism, his commentary must be considered at all events the most authoritative exposition of its true meaning.

Prince Casimir's administration was characterized throughout, by an enlightened and liberal zeal in favor both of letters and religion. Pains were taken at the same time to educate his nephew, the heir to the throne, in the same principles and spirit; so that when he came into power, under the name of *Frederick the Fourth*, no change of policy took place in any respect. He was heartily devoted to the interests of the Reformed Church; and under him particularly, the university seems to have attained to its greatest splendor. The

principal ornament of the theological faculty at this time, was David Pareus, of whom we have just spoken as the most distinguished disciple of Ursinus, and the editor of his works.

The fortunes of the Catechism after this in the Palatinate, were very variable; being always more or less controlled by the eventful political history of the country.

Frederick IV. was succeeded by his son, *Frederick the Fifth.* In an evil hour, against the advice of his best friends, this prince consented to accept the crown of Bohemia; which was offered to him on the part of that country, when it had resolved, after the death of Matthias, to refuse submission to the Austrian yoke. His coronation took place at Prague, with great pomp, on the 25th of October, 1619. In the course of the following year he was terribly defeated by the imperial army, before the same city, and deprived not only of his new crown, but also of his hereditary dominions. It was the first act in the bloody drama of the *Thirty Years' War;* for which the elements of discord had been mustering their strength for years before, and which now made room for a long series of horrors, which the pen of the historian finds it difficult to describe.

The Palatinate soon lay completely humbled, beneath the strong hand of imperial power. This was of course the full triumph of Romanism, at the same time, over the Protestant institutions of the land. In the year 1622, the Bavarian general Tilly, laid waste the beautiful environs of Heidelberg, and finally after a severe siege forced his way into the city itself by storm. A

terrible scene followed, of burning, pillage and slaughter. Melancholy to relate, the treasures of the university itself were not permitted to escape the fury of this Vandal assault. For four days, the noble library, which so many princes had made it their ambition to enrich, and from whose stores so many learned men had drawn nourishment for their intellectual life, stood openly exposed to the ravages of the common soldiery;* and it was only the general rush for booty of another kind, that saved it from entire destruction. As it was, the whole of it became lost from this time forward to Heidelberg. It was devoted as a trophy of war to the pope; and not long after, borne on a long train of mules, it was seen making its way over the mountains, to rest finally in the chambers of the vatican.† The whole religious aspect of the Palatinate was now changed,

* A portion of the manuscripts are said to have been used by stupid dragoons as straw for their horses.

† The ruin of the "Bibliotheca Palatina" formed one of the most sad disasters of the Thirty Years' War; and was deplored as a public loss, by learned men, throughout all Germany. "The mother of all libraries," says one, "not only for Germany but many other lands also, is gone! A treasure not to be told in price, such as the Roman empire will no more be able to create! The Manuscripts alone were valued at 80,000 crowns. Well did it deserve, in one word, the title: Optimus Germaniæ literatæ thesaurus!" Efforts were made, after the war, to recover the library from the court of Rome; but without success. It is interesting to know however, that an effort of the same sort made in our own century, has had a somewhat more favorable result. At the close of the war of 1815–16, the university of Heidelberg again put in its old claim for the restitution of the captive library. With some trouble, nearly a thousand manuscripts were recovered.

Crowds of foreign monks came in, laying claim to the property that had belonged formerly to the monasteries. The Reformed ministers were expelled. The Catechism fell. All assumed once more the Roman aspect. Sad to relate, large numbers of the people consented to change their faith, in order to save themselves from expatriation and worldly loss. The university was transformed into a Jesuit college.

By the heroic courage of *Gustavus Adolphus*, king of Sweden, the afflicted province was restored again in great part to its Protestant state; but only for a short season. After the defeat of the Swedish army in 1634, all the fair prospects of the country were a second time completely and cruelly blasted. Famine and pestilence were now added to the scourge of war. Rapine and violence filled the land; and for twelve long years, the Palatinate groaned beneath a constantly accumulating weight of sorrows, which it is impossible fully to describe.

By the *Peace of Westphalia*, A. D. 1648, these calamities were at length brought to an end. The Bavarian supremacy now ceased, and the government of the land fell once more into the hands of its true and proper sovereign. The Reformed Church was seen rising again, as it were from the ashes of her former glory, a spectacle of mournful interest to Churches of the same faith in other lands. Of three hundred and forty seven preachers who had been settled in the Palatinate of the Rhine, at the beginning of the war, only forty two were found remaining in it when the war closed, in a few towns and villages occupied by the

Swedes; and only fifty four returned from the general banishment, to resume the work of the ministry in their native land. Gradually however the state of the Church improved, along with the return of prosperity to the province in general. This restoration of the Reformed faith included of course the erection of the Catechism to its former authority, as the religious ensign of the nation. But greater toleration than before was now exercised towards other confessions. Some attempt was made even, on the part of the government, to unite the two Protestant confessions in a common form of worship; though without success.

This interval of rest and peace endured, however, only about forty years. By the death of prince *Charles* in 1685, the direct line of succession failed, and the electorate passed over to a different branch of the same house, in the person of *Philip William*, duke of Neuburg. He belonged unfortunately to the Roman Church; and although he stood pledged to respect the religious constitution of the land, his administration necessarily operated in various ways, to make Romanism respectable, and to extend its influence. His connection with the house of Orleans moreover served as a pretext for France, to lay claim to the whole Palatinate; and the consequence was a new war from this quarter, which for a time revived in full the horrors of the "Thirty Years." In the year 1688, Heidelberg was taken by the French and handled with the most savage barbarity. Not only was the surrounding country laid waste, and the city abandoned to general plunder; but a spirit of the most wanton destruction was let loose at the same

time upon the whole strength and beauty of the place. Walls, towers and palaces, were blown up, and whole streets consumed by fire. Immense cruelties were inflicted besides on the inhabitants. At the end of eighteen months the army was forced to retire; but a new invasion followed three years later. In May, 1693, Heidelberg again fell into the hands of the French; the old cruelties were renewed; and to crown all, the whole city was involved finally in flames, and became thus a heap of blackened ruins. Even the sepulchres of the dead found no respect; the bones of honored princes and heroes, long departed, were barbarously dragged from their resting place, and scattered in the streets.

The whole war was made to bear the character of a religious persecution. It affected something of the merit of a crusade, in the service of the Roman Catholic Church, against Protestantism. The Protestants were compelled in many cases to fly the country. Colonies from the Reformed Church of the Palatinate, were now formed, in this way, in different parts particularly of Prussia. Roman Catholics, on the other hand, crowded in to fill up the room which was thus made vacant.

Peace was again restored in 1697, and the city which had suffered so many wrongs began to rise once more, with vast activity, from its own ashes. But the Protestant cause was not able to recover its lost advantages and rights. Romanism was now become a strong interest in the land, and had usurped in many cases the power and wealth which once belonged to the Reformed Church. It began accordingly to assume a hostile bearing towards this last, which showed itself particu-

larly in a sort of angry quarrel with the Heidelberg Catechism. The 80th Question, which had long been a cause of offence, was held up now to special odium, as not merely calumnious to the Church of Rome, but insulting to the government of the country. It was in reply to such assaults on the part of the Jesuits, that the celebrated *Lenfant* wrote his work entitled, *The Innocence of the Heidelberg Catechism*. This had not served however to silence complaint. The controversy grew more and more serious. In the year 1707, counsellor *Rittmeyer*, a Protestant originally, who had since become a zealous convert to the Church of Rome, assailed the Catechism with great severity. Not only the 80th Question, but the 94th, the 97th and the 98th also, fell under censure, as false and disrespectful to the religion of the prince; and the Reformed were taken to task sharply, for not at once so altering their formulary as to expunge from it all offense of this kind. Rittmeyer was answered by two of the Heidelberg theologians. Replies and rejoinders followed as usual; and the whole land was soon filled with excitement. On the side of the Reformed Church, it was maintained that the Catechism had existed in its present form, long before the Palatinate had come into the circumstances in which it now stood; that its age, no less than its origin, as a symbolical book, entitled it to be held inviolate; that other church symbols, and especially the Articles of the Council of Trent, employed language full as severe towards dissenting systems of faith; and finally, that the hard expressions which were complained of in this case, must be referred at all events to doc-

trines only, and not to the persons by whom they might happen to be held. On these grounds, it was said, the Church could not consent at this time to introduce into the Catechism any such alteration, as was required from the other side.

Thus things proceeded till the year 1719, when all at once an electoral decree appeared, prohibiting the use of the Heidelberg Catechism in the Palatinate altogether. Some Roman Catholic bookseller, who was authorized to print Protestant books, had issued an edition of the Catechism, to which was inconsiderately prefixed the elector's coat of arms, with the words underneath: *By order of his electoral Serene Highness.* The appearance of this publication proved extremely offensive, and the occasion was improved by the active friends of Romanism, to secure the decree now mentioned; in which the Catechism was condemned in form, as injurious to the electoral dignity, as well as to the laws of the empire and the authority of the emperor, and therefore necessary to be suppressed. Remonstrance was made against the order, in vain. No regard was shown to the most reasonable considerations. The decree was declared to be final; and it was made known at the same time, that any attempt which might be made to vindicate the Catechism, or to sustain its authority in any way, would be visited with special punishment.

This tyrannical measure drew upon the Palatinate, the attention of the Protestant courts of Europe generally. By letters and embassies from all sides, the elector was called upon to restore to his Reformed subjects,

the public and free use of their symbolical book. In the end the pressure became too heavy to withstand; and with a bad grace the entire point was yielded. By direction of the emperor, who had sense enough to see that the elector was on ground that could not be maintained, a new inquiry was instituted on the whole case. Two distinguished theologians of the Reformed Church were called in, to assist in the conference. It was proposed, in the first place, that they should modify the 80th Question, so as to make it more smooth and conciliatory. This however they refused to do, as not being authorized to make the slightest alteration in the case. But they protested, that the Catechism had regard here to doctrines only, and carried in it no disrespect to persons; on which account, it was hoped the elector would be pleased to withdraw the order, which he had issued against its use. To this accordingly, with due show of formality, the negotiation ultimately came. It was agreed to look upon the whole difficulty, as one that had grown out of misunderstanding and mistake. The Reformed Church was authorized to use her Catechism again, with the same liberty as before; only it must not carry the elector's coat of arms any more in front; and pains must be taken besides to let the people understand, in the schools and churches, that the 80th Question had respect to the doctrine of the mass merely, and not at all to the persons holding it, who were not to be stigmatized as *idolators*, though the mass itself be there pronounced "*an accursed idolatry.*"

This distinction between doctrine and person, it may

be added, was held by many to be disingenuous on the part of the Palatinate divines, and a curious controversy sprang out of it concerning *idolatry in the abstract* and *idolatry in the concrete;* of which however it is not necessary here to take any farther notice.

Had the Catechism stood for the Palatinate only, it must have risen and fallen wholly with the fortunes of the Reformed Church, in that interesting land. In this case, its historical importance would be circumscribed by comparatively narrow bounds. The Church of the Palatinate had its glory, for the most part, in the beginning. It never recovered itself in full, from the shock of the Thirty Years' War ; and from the year 1685, when a Roman Catholic prince was raised to the electorate, it declined still more and more; till finally, instead of being as it was at first the head of all the Reformed Churches in Germany, it became the least considerable of the whole, and sunk indeed almost entirely out of sight.

But the Catechism has a wider history, than that of the particular Church to which it owes its birth. It very soon passed over the limits of the Palatinate, and became the property of the Church also in other lands.

## VII. THE CATECHISM ABROAD.

*General reception in the Reformed Church. Switzerland. France. England. Hungary. Poland. Germany. Holland. Arminian opposition. Synod of Dort. Commentaries. America. Reformed Dutch and German Reformed Churches.*

The Heidelberg Catechism, as soon as it became known, commanded not only the respect, but the admiration of the entire Reformed Church. On all sides, it was welcomed as the best popular summary of religious doctrine that had yet appeared, on the side of this confession. Distinguished divines in other lands united in bearing testimony to its merits. It was considered the glory of the Palatinate, to have presented it to the world. The great Bullinger of Switzerland wrote to a friend: "I have read the Catechism of the elector palatine, Frederick, with the greatest interest, and have blessed God, while doing so, who thus perfects his own work. The arrangement of the book is clear; the matter is true, and beautiful and good; all is full of light, fruitful and pious; with the greatest brevity its contents are manifold and large. In my judgment, no better catechism has heretofore been published." — This is only a specimen of the way, in which the work was received generally throughout the Reformed Church. It rose rapidly into the character of a general symbol, answerable in this view to the popular standard possessed by the other confession in

the Catechism of Luther. Far and wide it became the basis, on which systems of religious instruction were formed by the most excellent and learned divines. In the course of time, commentaries, paraphrases, and courses of sermons were written upon it almost without number. Few works have gone through as many different versions. It was translated into Hebrew, Ancient Greek and Modern Greek,* Latin, Low Dutch, Spanish, French, English, Italian, Bohemian, Polish, Hungarian, Arabic, and Malay.

SWITZERLAND, from the first, held the Heidelberg Catechism in the highest esteem. Various catechisms had been in use here, before its appearance; one by Leo Juda, another be Œcolampadius, the Catechism of Zurich by Bullinger, the Catechism of St. Gall, and particularly Calvin's Catechism, of which some notice has been taken before. In the midst of these established formularies however, the new text book of the Reformed faith was soon invested with a sort of universal authority, as a bond of religious profession for the land in general. In St. Gall, it was introduced into the schools and churches. The Catechism of Zurich was so revised, in the beginning of the following century, as to be brought more near to it than before. In most of the other cantons, it was admitted, sooner or later, to at least a partial public use. The high credit in which it stood, appears also from the numerous edi-

*Both into ancient and modern Greek. Into the first by *Frederick Sylburg*, Heidelberg, 1597. This translation was sent to the Greek patriarch at Constantinople. The version into modern Greek took place at Leyden, 1618, under the direction of the States General of Holland.

tions of it published in that country, and from the many commentaries and expositions with which it has been honored by eminent Swiss divines.

In FRANCE, the Reformed Church, as already mentioned, made use of the Catechism of Calvin; which was often called simply the *French Catechism*. The Heidelberg Catechism of course was not introduced into the churches and schools. Still various translations were made of it into the French language, and it was held always in very high respect. Great attention was given by this Church to catechetical instruction. For a whole century, we find in the acts of almost every Synod, some reference to the subject.

In ENGLAND also and SCOTLAND the Catechism of the Palatinate was held in the same high regard. Immediately after its formation, it was translated into the language of these countries, and became thus extensively read and admired in both of them. A variety of Catechisms appeared in England, at an early period; till at length one was prepared, a. 1572, under special appointment, by Alexander Nowel, which took the place of all others, and continued in permanent force afterwards as the standard catechism of the established Church. The Puritans, as they were called, by means of the famous Westminister Assembly, produced about the middle of the next century the *Larger* and *Smaller* Catechisms, which have since held so high a place in the Presbyterian Church, both in Great Britain and in this country. Special respect was shown by this venerable body, in the execution of their task, to the Heidelberg Catechism.

In Hungary, the same formulary soon supplanted, with the Reformed Church, all other catechisms, and was introduced into general use as a symbolical book. Teachers as well as ministers were required to take an oath, that they cordially embraced the system of truth contained in it, and that they would follow it truly in all their religious instructions.

A like favorable reception was given to the Catechism in Poland. It was translated into the Polish language by *Andrew Prasmovius;* and soon came into general use, as an authoritative exposition of the faith of the Reformed Church.

In Germany, the Reformed confession gained ground gradually far beyond the bounds of the Palatinate. This was owing partly to the influence exerted by neighboring countries, particularly Switzerland and Holland; but still more no doubt to the process, by which Lutheranism itself became complete, in being carried forward to its last consequence, the *Form of Concord.* A large amount of Calvinistic feeling, which had prevailed in the Church as moderate Lutheranism, was forced by this onward movement to seek a different position. In all directions accordingly, we discover with the advance of time the presence of Reformed views and principles, in conflict with the rigid orthodoxy of the other confession, and a more or less full and open profession of the Reformed faith.—In *East Friesland,* the struggle between the two confessions commenced, with the entrance of the Reformation itself into the country. — Some account has already been given of the religious commotion in *Bremen.*—All

along the Rhine, in different cities and provinces, *Juliers*, *Cleves*, *Berg*, &c., the principles of the Reformed Church unfolded themselves more or less successfully, in conflict with the high toned Lutheranism of the day. The Form of Concord, a. 1576 as just intimated, served greatly to strengthen the tendency in this direction. Thus in the close of the century, the Churches of *Nassau*, *Hanau*, *Isenburg*, and others of smaller note, seceded formally from the Lutheran ranks, and became Calvinistic. *Anhalt*, in the year 1597, made a similar transition. Still more important was the change which took place in the beginning of the next century, when Maurice, landgrave of *Hesse*, and John Sigismund, elector of *Brandenburg*, embraced the Reformed communion. In this last case indeed the revolution was not at once so entire as in the other; since the prince was disposed to allow the free profession of Lutheranism as before, in his dominions. The bigotry of the party however soon made it necessary for him to suppress the Form of Concord, by public authority. In other respects, the liberal and tolerant policy of Sigismund continued the permanent order of the state.

In the Reformed Church, as thus prevailing in different principalities throughout Germany, various catechisms appeared, and secured to themselves a more or less extensive use. In the end however all of these were either cast aside, or sunk into a secondary rank; while the Catechism of the Palatinate attained to a sort of universal authority, as the leading symbol of the Church. In Juliers, Cleves and Berg, it was early

introduced into the churches and schools ; and in 1580 we find it made of full force by law, as an ecclesiastical standard. So afterwards in Hesse-Cassel, Anhalt, and the several free cities which had embraced the Reformed faith. It became the acknowledged confessional standard of the *German Reformed Church* at large, as distinguished from the other great Protestant confession. Hence we find even in Prussia, at the beginning of the last century, a royal order, requiring all ministers of Reformed churches to lecture every sabbath afternoon on the Heidelberg Catechism, according to the practice observed in Holland.

Germany of course has not failed to do her full share towards the literature of the Catechism. It has passed through an almost incredible number of editions, in her hands. Commentaries of all sorts, in long succession, have appeared in its service. Among all these however no one seems to have proved so popular as the "*Golden Treasure*" of John D'outrein, translated into German from the Dutch, and furnished with annotations and additions by Frederick Adolphus Lampe. This large work has been honored with edition after edition, and may be said indeed to have carried with it, for a time, a sort of symbolical authority for ministers and teachers, both in Germany and Holland. Widder's work on the Catechism has also been held in high repute. — Others too deserve special praise ; but it is unnecessary, in the present place, to be more particular.

In the midst of its honors, the Catechism still encountered, in Germany at large no less than in the Pala-

tinate, no small amount of angry opposition. Romanists and high Lutherans joined, in crying out against it as heterodox and pernicious. The notable 80th Question proved a constant stench, in many nostrils. In some cases, when it was known that the minister was to preach upon this question, troublesome persons would slip into the Church, for the purpose of creating interruption and disorder. Not unfrequently, at the public fairs, fanatical well fed monks might be heard, from some elevated place, haranguing the populace in the lowest billingsgate style; at which times, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the 80th Question in particular, were very apt to come in for a special share of abuse. In the year 1621, a certain Jesuit of Cologne, by the name of Coppenstein, attracted some attention, by publishing the "*Calvinistic Heidelberg Catechism Discalvinised;*" in which the questions were all furnished with Roman Catholic answers, with the true text thrust by way of contrast into the margin. Another writer put forth, "*Four Dialogues on the Catechism, between two Reformed citizens, Samson and Job.*" In this production, every question is taken up and embarrassed with subtle, far fetched difficulties; till in the end, the honest worthies find themselves involved in impenetrable smoke, and are glad to take refuge in the Church of Rome. In other cases, where there was not perhaps the same ability to wield the polemic pen, the Catechism was subjected to violence of a different kind; cast into the fire; solemnly flogged with rods, in the pulpit; or maltreated in some similar dramatic way; to show how heartily it was hated, and

how richly it deserved to be extirpated from the world as a work of the devil.

In no country, however was the Heidelberg Catechism more generally received, or more highly honored, than it was in the NETHERLANDS.

The Reformation was matured in this land, amid the storms of political revolution. The same convulsions which set the Church free, gave birth also to a new and powerful Republic. From the beginning various influences conspired, to incline the country towards the Calvinistic rather than the Lutheran creed. In the end, this tendency completely prevailed. The celebrated *Belgic Confession*, prepared mainly at first by Adrian Saravia, in the spirit and very much in the form also of the Confession used by the Reformed Church in France, was publicly adopted in Flanders in the year 1562; after which, it came into authority by degrees throughout the Church. Especially did the Reformed faith predominate in the seven northern provinces, which in the year 1579 constituted themselves into an independent state.

In the Walloon churches, of the Netherlands, using the French language, the Catechism of Calvin was in common use. The Dutch congregations used at first the Catechism of Emden, drawn up originally by Lasco, and translated into the Dutch language by John Utenhoven. As soon however as the Catechism of the Palatinate came to be known, it took precedence of both, and continued to grow in credit, till it became in a short time of acknowledged symbolical authority throughout the Church. As early as the year 1566,

Peter Gabriel made use of it for public religious instruction, at Amsterdam. In the year 1568, a general synod held at Wesel recommended, that in the French churches of the Netherlands the Catechism of Geneva (Calvin's) should continue to be employed, and that where the Dutch tongue prevailed, use should be made of the Heidelberg Catechism; though it was still left free to the particular congregations to follow their own judgment in the case. The same recommendation was renewed, in somewhat stronger terms, A. D. 1571. Finally by the national synod of 1574, held at Dort, the advice became a formal decree, and the Catechism was clothed with absolute ecclesiastical authority for the whole Church. After this we find the regulation established, that the ministers should every where preach upon it on Sunday afternoons, so as to go over the whole of it once a year. The city of Gouda in South Holland undertook, some time afterwards, to introduce a new compend of religious instruction into its schools. But the ministers of the place were called to account, and publicly censured for the attempt. Various other catechisms appeared in the country during the seventeenth century; but they had no weight whatever against the general use and authority of the Heidelberg formulary. This continued in force as the standard text book of the Church, and became at last so identified with its life, as to pass often under the title simply of the *Belgic Catechism*.

Here again however, as in other lands, the Catechism drew upon itself the active opposition of many enemies. The Romanists burned it, or whipped it

with rods. One Martin Duncan wrote a sort of opposition catechism, on the Roman side. Argument and wit were both employed to bring it into discredit. Among others, some unknown person put forth the "*Thumbscrew;*" in which two weavers are introduced, discoursing of their business at a tavern, when upon a boast made by one of his skill in sorting tangled thread, the other to test his powers brings forward the Heidelberg Catechism, and engages him, in the presence of the landlord and wife, to unravel and adjust certain parts of it according to the rule of faith given in the bible. The task of course proves desperate; and so all runs out at last into a flood of reproach upon the Catechism, as a most perverse and unsound production. There was opposition to it besides however, from a different quarter. The case of the city of Gouda has just been mentioned. Certain ministers at Utrecht also refused to give it their subscription. In the year 1583, *Dirck Volkartz Coornhart* openly attacked it, in a publication which he dedicated to the States General. He objected particularly to the 5th and 114th Questions, in which so strong a statement is given of the inability of men to fulfil the demands of God's law. A leaven of Pelagianism was secretly active, at different points, in the bosom of the Reformed Church itself; which seems to have been the source of all this unfriendly feeling, towards the Catechism as a rule of faith. The opposition came to its full force finally in the rise of Arminianism, and its revolutionary attempt to overthrow entirely the established faith of the Church.

Arminius, as professor of divinity at Leyden, seemed to be fully satisfied at first with the doctrines of the Heidelberg Catechism. Soon however he began to have scruples with regard to several points; and expressed his wish that there might be a revision of it, for the purpose of removing its objectionable features. Then towards the last again, he insisted that the doctrine of predestination, as commonly held in the Reformed Church, was not to be found in the Catechism, and that his own views here were in full harmony with its teaching. After his death, his friends, the *Remonstrants*, as they were called, discovered the same instability, with regard to this point. At times they contended that their own system, and not that of their opponents, was the one contained in the Catechism. But soon again, they would be found taking all sorts of exception to its contents, and objecting to its use in the churches. They urged that it was defective, and needed at least a thorough revision; the more especially as it had been introduced into the Netherlands at the first, without any formal, public trial of its merits, such as the importance of the case required.

It was concluded finally on the part of the government, to call a general Synod of the Reformed Church, for the purpose of taking this whole difficulty into consideration. In the year 1618, accordingly, was convened the memorable *Synod of Dort*; which resulted in the condemnation of the views held by the Arminian party, and their exclusion from the bosom of the Reformed Church. At this Synod, delegates were present, not only from the United Provinces, but also from

England, Switzerland, the Palatinate, Hessia, Nassau, East Friesland, and Bremen. The Church in France would have been represented too, had not the French monarch interposed his authority, requiring her delegates to stay at home. The Synod continued its sessions for six months.

Among other matters acted upon, the Heidelberg Catechism was brought under the special review of this venerable body; as the question was now formally submitted, on the part of the Dutch Church, whether it called for any correction or emendation, to make it a fair exhibition of the Reformed faith. The whole being first read over, each delegate was called upon to declare his judgment honestly with regard to this point. The result was a full and unanimous approval of the work; and a formal declaration was filed accordingly, in the name of all present, "that the doctrine contained in the Catechism of the Palatinate was found to be conformable at all points to the word of God; that there was nothing in it that needed in this view to be changed or corrected; and that altogether it formed a most accurate compend of the christian faith, being with singular skill not only adjusted to the apprehension of tender youth, but so framed also as to serve the purpose of instruction at the same time in the case of older persons." When we reflect upon the constitution of the Synod, and consider the circumstances under which this testimony and ratification were given, they must be felt to be honorable to the Catechism in the highest degree, and to invest it with an authority which may

well challenge the respect and veneration of the whole Reformed Church.

The greatest attention was paid to catechetical instruction, in the Netherlands. The duty was pressed upon heads of families. Schools were required to cooperate with the churches, in carrying the system into full effect. The pastors must preach on the Catechism every sabbath afternoon; besides visiting the schools frequently, and holding catechetical exercises, if possible once a week, in private houses. All pains were required to be taken, to secure in this way to old and young the benefit of religious knowledge.

It is not strange that such a country should abound in commentaries on the Catechism. Holland seems to have surpassed even Germany itself, in this kind of literature. Among all these expositions, none has been more extensively used than that of *Festus Hommius*; which however is more a compilation from various other works, than an original treatise by Hommius himself. The principal contributor to it may be said indeed to have been Ursinus himself, whose expositions, published by Pareus after his death, were to a great extent translated and incorporated into this work. The celebrated English divine *William Ames*, who after leaving his own country for the sake of truth came to stand so high in Holland, published among his other numerous works a *Skiography* also, as he called it, of the Heidelberg Catechism. Of other names, honorably associated with the work in the same way *Theelinck*, *Diest*, *Poudrayen*, *Heussen*, *Beltsnyder*, *Van Leren*, *De Witte*, *De Bouma*, *Bekker Coccejus*,

*Marets*, *Vorster*, *Hakvoord*, *Van Huttem*, *Vander Hoocht*, *Breukland*, *Van Hœke*, *Venhuysen*, *Van der Kemp*, *Van der Steeg*, and a whole legion besides, it cannot be pretended of course to speak here in detail.

It remains to notice briefly the authority of the Catechism in AMERICA.

## VIII. THE CATECHISM IN AMERICA.

*Reformed Dutch Church. Historical sketch. Present state. German Reformed Church. General view of its history in America. Relations of the two Churches at this time.*

At a very early period, the Catechism of the Palatinate made its way to the wilds of America. It is now more than two centuries, since it was erected as a standard of evangelical orthodoxy on the island of Manhattan, where the city of New York has since acquired such great importance. Around it rallied the faith and worship of thousands, transplanted through successive years from the old world to the shores of the new. In the midst of ecclesiastical convulsions and political storms, the *Reformed Dutch Church* of America, clinging fast to her hereditary creed, has since struck her roots deep into the soil, and spread forth her boughs luxuriantly to the face of heaven, till she has become known and honored throughout the whole christian world. A century later in its origin, the American *German Reformed* Church—sprung indeed,

in a certain sense, from the same womb, or at least nursed in the beginning by the same maternal arms—comes forward also to claim our attention. She too has had her deep waters to pass through, whose billows had well nigh swallowed her up. But the favor of "Him who dwelt in the bush," has accompanied her notwithstanding, in the midst of her most gloomy seasons of trial. Though sorely tossed, during a long night of desolation, on raging chaotic seas, with little notice and less sympathy, she has not abandoned still the martyr faith of her fathers. No force has yet proved sufficient to wrench from her grasp the precious legacy, bequeathed to her in the Heidelberg Catechism. At this hour, she cleaves to it with an attachment that promises to grow stronger only as it becomes more intelligent; rejoicing and glorying in it, as at once the true key to the spirit of her organization, and the bond also by which alone she may expect to gain new strength and become fully compacted together, in time to come, as a holy temple unto the Lord.

As early as the yaar 1609, the Dutch found their way into what now forms the harbor of New York, and up the great river which has since borne the name of *Hudson*, the famous sea captain who conducted the expedition. The communication thus opened at this point with the new world, was kept up from year to year, for the purposes of trade; till at length, in 1614, a fort and trading house were erected near the spot on which Albany now stands; about which time also a similar settlement was permanently established on the south-west point of Manhattan island.

The first emigrants were drawn across the Atlantic, of course, by the hope of acquiring wealth. With all their zeal for making money however, they brought with them also their attachment for the principles and order of the Reformed Church, in whose bosom they had been educated; and measures were soon taken to secure religious privileges under the same form, in the land of their pilgrimage. There is reason to believe that a church was organized at Fort Amsterdam *(New York,)* as early as the year 1619; although no authentic records of its history are to be found, reaching farther back than 1639. The first minister of this church was the Rev. Everardus Bogardus. The church at *Albany* may claim perhaps as high an antiquity, as that of New York. In the course of years, with the growth of the colony, churches were established also at other points.

The ministers of these churches were ordained by the Classis of Amsterdam, and continued under its ecclesiastical supervision, with the approbation of the Synod of North Holland, to which that Classis belonged. In this way the American Church fell almost entirely under the control of this body; and remained thus, through filial respect, in a relation of spiritual wardship to the Classis of Amsterdam, long after their interests required them to form a Classis of their own, and transact their ecclesiastical affairs for themselves. This servile dependence lasted indeed for more than a century. In the end it was an opinion with many, that no ministerial authority could be legitimate, that did not come from beyond the seas; that no ordination

was valid, unless it had impressed upon it the broad seal of the Classis of Amsterdam.

In the year 1664, the colony passed into the hands of the English, and came under the government of the duke of York. This served in the end to advance the Church of England, at the cost of the Dutch Church. Many families passed over from the last communion to the first. Still the Dutch interest continued to prosper, in close connection with the mother Church in Holland, on to the middle of the following century,

Now however the whole body was convulsed, and threatened with destruction, by the proposal to establish an independent American Classis. Two nearly equal parties, for and against the new movement, were immediately developed in broad battle array; and for fifteen years, the Church became a scene of such ecclesiastical conflict and confusion, as it is still humiliating and painful to report. In many cases, the general quarrel was carried, among the people, to actual tumult and deeds of disgraceful violence. On all sides, bitterness and wrath prevailed. The Church rocked, like a crazed vessel in the storm, ready to fall asunder.

To make things worse, the question of *language* now came forward also for practical decision. Must the Dutch Church continue, here in America, to worship God in Dutch forever; or might it be proper, now that a large part of the people, the young people in particular, were coming to use English only in every other case, to admit this tongue also with proper restrictions into the pulpit? That was the question. Sufficiently easy of answer, one would think, even for

a child, in the abstract; but tremendously difficult, as we all know, in actual practice. Strange to tell, the American Dutch Church had contrived to hold it at bay, down till the middle of the last century, sacrificing hundreds of her children, but faithfully upholding the mother tongue in all her places of worship. It was in the year 1764, that English preaching was heard for the first time, in the collegiate church of New York. But now the crisis had come. The question, shall we allow English preaching in Dutch Churches? must be met and settled. It must be settled in the affirmative too, if the Church itself were to be saved. But the settlement was not effected, without loud, wild uproar. To many, the introduction of English seemed a grand heresy or treason. Did it not strike at the *root* of the Dutch Church? For how could the Church be Dutch, and yet speak English.

In the end however, the controversy *was* settled, on the side of reason and common sense. It was found that the attempt to stem the influx of the English language, was about as wise as to think of turning the Hudson up stream. The Church has long since acquiesced in the necessity of sacrificing her old language, in order to preserve her old faith; and at this time accordingly, there are but few among all her children, to whom a Dutch sermon would be more intelligible than one in Hebrew or Chinese.

The other question came also at length to a happy adjustment; through the agency mainly, we are told, of the late very venerable JOHN H. LIVINGSTON, whose name became so conspicuous subsequently in the his-

tory of the Church. An amicable settlement of difficulties, with which both parties now wearied with their own long contention professed to be fully satisfied, was regularly consummated in the year 1772, under the auspices and favor of the Classis of Amsterdam itself. A certain subordination to her authority of the mother Church in Holland was admitted, on the one hand; while on the other, regular judicatories were established for the transaction of all ecclesiastical business in this country. Soon after this, the Revolutionary war took place; which of course suspended, for the time, all communication between the two Churches. Some disposition was shown afterwards by the Church in Holland, to exercise still a sort of ecclesiastical supremacy over her American daughter. But this last had now attained to such maturity and self-reliance, as no longer to be satisfied with any such foreign supervision. She proceeded accordingly to take the management of her affairs, entirely into her own hands. This was done conclusively, in the end, by the adoption of an independent church constitution, A. D. 1792, suitable to the circumstances and wants of the Church in this country. The Church consisted at this time of about one hundred and twenty congregations, under the care of five Classes.

Previously to this, it had been determined to establish a professorship of theology, with the view of training up a properly learned ministry at home, now that all foreign supply was in the nature of the case coming to an end; and on the recommendation of the Classis of Amsterdam, which had been governed in the case

by the advice of the theological faculty of Utrecht, the Rev. Dr. Livingston was appointed to take charge of this responsible trust. The Reformed Dutch Church was the first thus to form the scheme of a theological seminary, among all the religious bodies of this country. It was long however before the scheme was crowned with any tolerable success. A college had been established at New Brunswick before the Revolution, with which it was intended to connect the professorship of divinity. But the college itself through want of funds soon sank into insignificance ; and the professorship, more nominal than real, kept up for a number of years by the gratuitous services of Dr. Livingston in New York, was suffered also to fail at length altogether. An effort was again made in 1807 to resuscitate both interests ; but it was not before the year 1825, and after the college had failed in fact a second time, that the whole enterprize was placed finally on a sure and solid foundation. That same year, the patriarch Livingston died.

Since this time, the College and Theological Seminary have both continued to prosper; and with the prosperity of her institutions, the life of the Church has steadily advanced also in other respects. Her organization includes now a General Synod, two Particular Synods, upwards of twenty Classes, and about two hundred and forty congregations, with a membership which is put down in round numbers at twenty five thousand. As a body, the Church is possessed of great wealth, not being surpassed in this view, according to its size, by any other in the coun-

try. It includes also a large amount of intelligence and respectability. No denomination in the country is so fully supplied with ministerial service; nor can any boast of a ministry, which as a whole perhaps may be said to be better educated. The Church is accustomed to glory also in its orthodoxy; which is of the high Calvinistic order, according to the measure of the Belgic Confession and the Articles of the Synod of Dort. She places a high value of course on catechetical instruction, and cherishes a special veneration for the Heidelberg Catechism.* It may be added that her Liturgy is based to a great extent, as far as it goes, with some significant modifications, on the old German Liturgy of the Palatinate.

The history of the German Reformed Church in America, commences a full hundred years later than that of the Reformed Dutch. The oldest congregation is supposed to be the one at *Goshenhoppen*, in Montgomery county, Pennsylvania; whose existence dates as for back at least as 1717. Its first pastor, it would seem, was the Rev. Henry Gœtschy; whose labors however included, in the end, a very wide field besides. He preached statedly to congregations at *Skippack*, *Falconer Swamp*, *Saucon*, *Egypt*, *Maccungie*, *Moselem*, *Oley*, *Bern*, and *Tulpenhocken;* his circuit comprising a district, which is now covered by four counties, Montgomery, Chester, Berks and Lebanon.

*It is expressly required by the Constitution of the Church, that every one who takes a pastoral charge shall explain a portion of the Heidelberg Catechism on every Lord's Day, so as to go over the whole if possible every year.

*Bœhm's* church, so called after its first pastor, is of like early date. The Rev. Mr. *Weis* began to labor in Philadelphia about the year 1721; though the congregation there did not succeed in completing their first house for public worship before the year 1739. The emigration out of which these churches were formed, seems to have been mainly from the Palatinate.*

The Rev. Mr. Weis, in the year 1730, visited Holland, and other parts of Europe, in company with an elder of the name of *Reif*, to make collections in aid of

*"There is besides in this Province a vast number of Palatines, and they come in still every year. Those that have come of late years, are mostly Presbyterian, or as they call themselves, Reformed; the Palatinate being about three-fifths of that sort of people. They did use to come to me for baptism for their children, and many have joined with us in the other sacrament. They never had a minister till about nine years ago, who is a bright young man, and a fine scholar. He is at present absent, being gone to Holland, to get money to build a church in this city; but they are scattered all over the country. * * * * * * * * * They are diligent, sober, frugal, and rarely charged with any misdemeanor. * * * * There is lately come over a Palatine candidate of the ministry, who having applied to us at the Synod for ordination, 'tis left to three ministers to do it. He is an extraordinary person for sense and learning. We gave him a question to discuss about Justification, and he answered it, in a whole sheet of paper in a very notable manner. His name is John Peter Miller, and speaks Latin as readily as we do our vernacular tongue; and so does the other, Mr. Weis."—[*Extract from a letter of the Rev. Jedidiah Andrews to the Rev. Tho. Prince of Boston, dated "Philadelphia, 8th (October,) 14th 1730."—Hazard's Register, Vol. XV. p. 200 et seq.*]

This extract I owe to Mr. Rupp of Lancaster. The John Peter Miller, it may be added, of whom such favorable mention is here made, united a few years after with the *Sieben-Tæger* or *Dunkers* at Ephrata.

the feeble churches in Pennsylvania. Great interest was taken in their mission; particularly on the part of the Church in Holland; which was led now in fact to assume a sort of missionary maternal care over this German plantation in America, as earnest at least as any she had ever shown towards her own children in the American Dutch Church. "How many tokens of voluntary beneficence were bestowed upon them," say the Classis of Amsterdam in the year 1751, "both by church judicatories and by private members of our churches, is yet fresh in the recollection of many among us. The impulse of zeal and love in our christian synods and lower judicatories, and among private members also, seemed to be wrought up even to emulation, in the good work of relieving these necessities."* There was still however no regular communication with the infant colony; and for a number of years it appears to have passed again very much out of sight.

In the year 1746 however, the Lord stirred up the heart of one of his faithful servants in Switzerland, the *Rev. Michael Schlatter* of St. Gall, to an extraordinary interest in its behalf. What he learned in various ways of the spiritual destitution of the German churches in America, so affected him with sympathy and sorrow, that he found himself, like Nehemiah in the palace at Shushan, no longer able to enjoy any of the comforts that surrounded him at home. He felt himself bound to visit in person, as a missionary, his brethren in the new world; resigned his charge accordingly in Switzerland; travelled to Amsterdam; and received, first

*Introduction to Schlatter's Journal.

from the Amsterdam Classis, and afterwards from the Synods of South and North Holland conjointly, a general commission to visit the American churches, report upon their state, and take such action generally as the case might allow for advancing their spiritual welfare. Particularly he was to ascertain what could be done by different congregations for the support of the gospel among themselves, in case additional ministers should be sent over from Europe to occupy the ground. Mr. Schlatter arrived in Philadelphia the same fall; became settled at once as pastor of the churches in Philadelphia and Germantown; and from this point, made broad excursions from time to time, as a sort of general superintendent, among the congregations in the country, endeavoring to carry out the general object of his mission. He kept a regular journal of his proceedings, which was submitted to the Dutch Synods, on his return to Holland in the year 1751, and became public afterwards both in the Dutch and German languages. It forms in this way the only record we have, on the general state of the American German Reformed Church in the middle of the last century.

By means of its light, we perceive the destitutions of the Church to have been deplorably great. There were but four ministers besides Mr. Schlatter himself, on the field; all laboring in Pennsylvania; a most insufficent supply, even for the congregations already organized; while the call was heard in every direction, for the formation of new churches. Besides the destitution in Pennsylvania moreover, there was a cry

now for help also from New Jersey on the one side, and from Maryland and Virginia on the other ; where large German settlements had come to exist, without any pastoral care whatever. It is interesting to find however, in the midst of all this destitution, a general disposition to place a high value on the blessings of the gospel.

The ministers showed much missionary zeal in their work. On the 12th of October, 1746, they held a convention in Philadelphia — the first time they had thus met ; and here constituted themselves, by certain articles of agreement, not without many tears, into a formal church association ; which grew the following year, September 9, 1747, into what has been since styled the first regularly organized Synod of the German Reformed Church in this country. All hung still however in direct ecclesiastical dependence upon the Church of Holland ; and the organization was distinguished afterwards simply as the *Pennsylvania Cœtus.*

Answerable to the zeal of the ministers, seems to have been the readiness of the people also in general to welcome all efforts made for their spiritual benefit. Mr. Schlatter was received every where, with the most lively demonstrations of interest and regard. The people were melted to tears of thankfulness and joy, to find that the Church in Holland was so actively concerned, away beyond the ocean, in their behalf ; and the prospect of being able to secure a proper supply for their religious wants, stimulated them to new and extraordinary exertions to accomplish this great

object.* Mr. Schlatter testifies, that he met with a strong desire for evangelical ministrations, in every direction ; and christian parents especially were affectingly urgent, in many cases, in their solicitations for help. "They entreated and implored, with floods of tears, by all that was holy, that I would through the help of God assist them, as far as possible, and provide consolation for forsaken souls. I have observed every where the highest regard for the impressive and consoling instructions, given me by the Synod of Holland. Scarcely have I read them in any church, without seeing tears of joy on a number of cheeks ; while God was praised, for having put it into the hearts of christians in the Netherlands to care thus for their orphan state." Before the end of two years, as many as a dozen new charges were organized in Pennsylvania, which declared themselves willing to support pastors as soon as they could be furnished. Deputations came from a distance, in some cases two or three hundred miles, in the middle of winter, to negotiate for spiritual help.

*Scklatter's *Journal.* At Tulpenhocken, he preached to a congregation of more than 600 persons, in a wooden building; the Rev. Mr. Weis and the Rev. Mr. Bœhm both present at the same time; in the midst of much devout attention ; the desire and hope of the congregation to secure at last a stated minister, plainly legible on their countenances. "They could not conceal the exceeding joy and surprise they felt, in seeing three preachers together — a sight never witnessed there before. The old and the young shed tears of joy. I can truly say that this was to me, and to my brethren, a day of much refreshment. I thought of the blessed Netherlands, where the company of those that preach the gospel is so great ; while this extensive country is perishing for lack of teachers."

Mr. Schlatter, in the exercise of his missionary trust, visited also the congregations which had begun to be formed in New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia ; all of which appear to have exhibited the same lively interest in the general object of his mission. At Frederick especially, there was much melting of heart, on the occasion of his presence.*

Unfortunately however the supply of new ministers from Europe, kept no pace with this call for service in America. Of sixteen pastoral charges comprising 48 congregations in 1751, only five were provided with regular preaching. Mr. Schlatter returned to Holland, to enlist if possible additional help. His agency was followed with good results. Ministers and schoolmasters were sent over from time to time ; as also German bibles and other religious books. Still the supply was far from being sufficient; for with the rise of new settlements, the emigration still going forward from the Palatinate and Switzerland, the field to be occupied became continually more wide ; so that the increase of ministers fell greatly short always of the actual wants of the Church.

With the close of Schlatter's Report, we lose sight of the German churches in America almost entirely again,

*"As I was collecting my mind for the introductory prayer, and saw the tears flowing over the cheeks of the people, hungering for the bread of life, my heart was singularly taken and inflamed with love ; so that I fell on my knees, (as did also the whole congregation,) and was enabled with much power and love, and earnest supplication, to commit to the great God the house and worshippers, and to implore upon them his blessing." [*Schlatter's Report.*]

for the rest of the century. The Pennsylvania Cœtus continued to hold its meetings; and from year to year a regular report of its "*acta*" were forwarded to the Classis of Amsterdam; which had a standing committee *ad res Pennsylvanienses*, whose business it was particularly to look after the interests of this remote spiritual dependency. New ministers came over occasionally. Remittances of money were not unfrequent. Altogether a missionary relation between the two Churches; while at the same time, a very considerable independence was allowed to the American Cœtus; which passed to the exercise of all ecclesiastical powers, ordaining men of its own to the ministry and acting as a synod in other respects, as far as circumstances were felt to make it desirable; all as a matter of course, and without any of that difficulty which had attended the same transition in the case of the American Dutch Church.

This connection with the Church of Holland continued till about the year 1792, when it was interrupted by the wars growing out of the French Revolution. The German Reformed Church in America was now thrown entirely upon her own resources, to govern herself, and take care of her own affairs as she best could.

The condition of the Church at this time was by no means cheering. Most inadequately supplied with the means of grace, the people had come extensively to undervalue what they did not possess. The forms of religion supplied the place too generally of its life and power. All religious interests moreover had been made

to suffer greatly, in the nature of the case, by the agitations connected with the revolutionary war. Left in these circumstances to provide for itself, the German population was but poorly prepared to keep pace spiritually with the progress of the English community around it. Things grew worse indeed, instead of better. The Church lay exposed for years, like an ecclesiastical waste, to the irruption of all kinds of evil; so that many were brought to despair of its ever being recovered again to fruitfulness and life. For a full quarter of a century, and more, the tendencies of the people with regard to religion, seemed to be prevailingly downward rather than upward. On all sides great spiritual destitution; but no proper feeling now of the fact; a disposition rather to acquiesce in it as proper and right. Increasing wealth: large thriving farms, big barns, abundance of cattle; but along with all, an increase also of covetousness and worldliness, leading men to grudge every dollar given to the gospel as so much money thrown away. The old Catechism and Liturgy held in unrighteousness; associated with the notion of mere outward rites and forms; in broad opposition to personal heart religion, as something fanatical, methodistical, and mean. Well may we say, that the German Reformed Church had fallen into a state of great spiritual declension, approximating even to death itself. To the view of many indeed, she appeared to be dead altogether.

After all, however, the desolation was general only; not universal and complete. There was still a living spirit at work in the Church, at least at certain points;

and with some persons, we may trust, at all points; which in due time began to make itself felt, as a regenerating power, in the ecclesiastical life of the body. In this character, it became necessarily an effort in favor of spiritual religion, in opposition to a religion of mere dead forms. Naturally too it stood more or less closely connected, with the religious life of the surrounding English denominations, and seemed to accompany in this way the introduction of the English spirit into the Church. It was hardly to be expected, in these circumstances, that due account would be made always of what was good in the original constitution of the German Church itself; the temptation was strong rather to identify this with the abuses into which it had been found to run, and to seek help from a different quarter. This however could not fail of course to call forth a violent reaction again on the opposite side; an anti-English, anti-Puritan, anti-Methodistical movement; not without *some* feeling of right; but blindly hostile at bottom to all serious godliness, at least for the most part. Such we find to have been the course of things in fact; and in this form the Church was brought gradually to assume, after some time, a more encouraging aspect; the new spirit, as it might now be called, proving too strong, linked as it was with the inward life of religion, to be controlled and repressed by the old spirit and its dead forms.

In the year 1817, the minutes of the Synod were printed for the first time. Two years later, the body was divided into subordinate judicatories, under the appellation of *Classes*. The first *Delegate Synod* was

held in 1820. The Church consisted now, of about fifty ministers, and six times as many congregations.

The year following, 1821, a small party in East Pennsylvania seceded from the general body of the Church, and assumed a separate organization; not satisfied with the English tendencies that were coming to prevail; jealous for old usages and forms; deprecating in particular the project of a theological school; afraid of synodical consolidation, tyranny and oppression. Much of the same feeling prevailed, for a number of years subsequently, in a large part of the Church; closely connected with a similar spirit of jealousy, awakened by similar causes in the Lutheran communion. The agitation indeed became at last exceedingly great; revealing itself in public popular meetings, speeches and resolutions; full of indignation and violence towards the church movements of the time; as though they belonged to a general conspiracy against liberty itself.

It deserves to be noticed as a remarkable fact in the history of the Church, that the secession now mentioned, which was known henceforward as the *Free Synod*, after a separation of sixteen years, applied as a body to be restored again to its old connection, and was received accordingly. This event took place in the year 1836, at the meeting of the Synod in Baltimore.

The measure of establishing a Theological Seminary, long talked of, went into effect finally in the year 1825; the Rev. Dr. Lewis Mayer acting as professor; first in Carlisle; soon afterwards in York. A most important interest; involving in fact the existence of the Church itself in the end; which was left however for

years to hang in painful jeopardy, through the want of proper support; and which cannot be said, even to this hour, to have become fixed on any sure and solid foundation. It has grown notwithstanding into considerable importance. Out of the High School to which it gave rise at York, sprang finally *Marshall College*, in whose connection it now stands at Mercersburg. Both institutions were permanently located here, in the year 1836.

Along with this movement, other evangelical interests came in now also for their share of attention. Something was done towards the cultivation of a missionary spirit. A growing sympathy began to appear, in different directions, with the great religious and benevolent movements of the day generally, as they had come to engage the attention of other christian denominations. Sabbath Schools were formed. Prayer-meetings, special services for the promotion of religion, revivals, and all kindred forms of action, became common at least in a part of the Church; in spite of all the prejudice which continued to be felt towards them in another part. Altogether a great change undoubtedly in the state of the German Reformed Church; a true moral resurrection, we may say, so far as it has gone, in which all good men are bound to rejoice.

Yet it may not be disguised, at the same time, that the influence under which this favorable change took place, was in some respects foreign from the original character of the Church itself; and that it included tendencies also, to say the least, which could not fail,

if carried forward, to subvert this character altogether. We have no right to complain of the influence itself, on this account; it was in the highest degree seasonable, salutary, necessary. In no other way perhaps, was it possible to reach effectually the wants of the case. But even a salutary reaction may bring with it new dangers of its own; which it would be folly to overlook, because of the good with which they may thus happen to be associated. Methodism, in the last century, was salutary for the Church of England, in the way of provoking spiritual life; but could it be substituted, without disastrous loss, for the proper constitutional spirit of the Church of England itself, in its own sphere? So in the case before us. The renovation of the German Church required, we may say, that it should be brought into active contact with a church life which had not been originally its own; that the leaven of Puritanism in particular should be made to enter to some extent into its constitution. But it did not follow, for this reason, that its own original and properly constitutional life was in its own nature bad, and worthy only of being forever cast aside, to make room for the genius of Puritanism in full. It might still be fundamentally a better church life than this. The spiritual tendency in the German Church then became itself wrong, when its zeal for practical piety was allowed to run into the character of an actual hostility to the established institutions of the Church; as though *these* were fairly chargeable with the evils which were felt to be at hand; so that the only remedy in the case must needs be, to demolish the old church

system entirely, and re-construct all again upon a new and altogether different model.

To this extreme, as we all know, the tendency in question at one time threatened to carry the whole Church. The properly German spirit of the body fell in some measure into the back-ground; as something antiquated and obsolete; while purely English modes of thinking, of the modern Puritan order, came forward to occupy its place. Catechumen classes became unfashionable; confirmation lost its credit; the old church festivals fell into neglect; liturgical services seemed to savor of formality and superstition. Forms altogether were counted dangerous. The idea of sacramental grace was practically renounced. The entire theory of religion, in a word, was quietly changed into another form. It was no longer the theory embodied in the Catechism, and interwoven throughout with the ancient usages and institutions of the Church.

Such we say was the form, in which this new spirit seemed for a time to threaten at least, the very foundations of the old German church life. The case was made worse, by the simultaneous working of the same evil precisely, only under a more aggravated character, in the Lutheran Church; where the anxious bench was fast becoming for many a more powerful sacrament than baptism; and Luther's cardinal article of justification by faith, seemed well nigh ready to lose itself forever, in the methodistical imagination of justification by feeling.

Happily however this revolutionary tendency, in the German Reformed Church, has received a check. It

has begun to be perceived, that it is not necessary to destroy the old, in order to redeem it from abuse ; and a better sense than formerly is coming to prevail, of the constitutional character of the Church itself, as compared with the spirit of other American denominations. It is felt that it must be an ecclesiastical solecism, for the Church to pretend to stand in any other character, than that which belongs to her by true historical descent. In all this we have reason to rejoice. It augurs well for the prosperity and importance of the body, in time to come. Let us trust then that the process of church resurrection, years ago commenced, will be carried out happily to its proper completion in the direction now taken ; not by parting with any truly valuable acquisition already made, on the opposite side ; but by so fastening the new life of the Church on its own original root and trunk, that it may rise towards the future, vigorous and rich always with the full wealth of the past.

The German Reformed Church in the United States includes in her connection, at this time, about 240 ministers, and upwards of 700 congregations—embracing not less probably than 75,000 members. A vast population besides of course is comprehended, by outward connection, in her proper ecclesiastical charge. The organization falls into two Synods ; one in the west, with six Classes ; the other east of the Alleghany mountains, with eleven Classes.

The only symbolical book which the Church acknowledges, is the Heidelberg Catechism.

A feeling of more than common ecclesiastical relationship, has subsisted from the first between the Reformed Dutch and German Reformed Churches in this country. Steps were taken a few years since however, to bring them still closer together, in the way of something like a formal union. The result was the formation of what has been styled the *Triennial Convention;* in which the two German Synods, and the General Synod of the Dutch Church, are brought together by special delegates, once in three years, to transact in an advisory way such business as may be found to be of common concern. A praiseworthy experiment certainly, in the cause of Protestant catholicity; but not likely after all, it may be feared, to issue in any solid permanent advantage to this cause. It is not easy to see indeed how, under any circumstances, a connection so loose and general could amount to any thing more than the friendly correspondence, previously established between the two Churches; while it is very plain, that it must be attended with some dangers altogether its own. It has begun to appear already in fact that the arrangement is one, which is very liable to become a source of difficulty and distrust; and many, in both Churches, are coming to believe, that the sooner it is brought to an amicable and quiet close the better.

For with all their ecclesiastical affinity, the two Churches are by no means prepared to unite. The genius of the German Church has always been more free theologically than that of the Dutch; too much so altogether, in the view of this last, to be thoroughly orthodox. Both hold the Heidelberg Catechism; but

the Dutch Church binds it to a given sense by the Belgic Confession and the Articles of Dort; while the German Church significantly refuses to acknowledge any such rule. She will have no symbol but the free, untrammeled Catechism itself. The Dutch Church again includes in its constitution more of the Puritan element, than has yet come to prevail in the German Church. So we may say, in some sense, from the first; in Holland, as compared with Germany; although we meet with much here in the beginning, the old Calvinistic theory of the sacraments for instance, that belongs to a different system. But the fact noticed characterizes more particularly, of course, the state of the Church in this country. Here, hemmed in and surrounded on all sides by Puritan forms of thinking, it was hardly possible that, with the loss of her own tongue and cut off from all correspondence with the mother country, she should *not* give way largely to the power of this widely predominant system. It is well known besides, that the Church has received, into its ministry particularly, a considerable amount of *Scotch* life; which in the nature of the case may be supposed to have exerted a modifying influence upon its character, in the same general direction. The German Church, on the other hand, has less original affinity with Puritanism, and her circumstances have been more favorable to the preservation of her own distinctive character; though full of spiritual disadvantage in other respects. It is only of late, we may say, that a different tendency has shown itself to some extent in her communion; in connection with the revival of a

more active religious life, and in the way of opposition to the dead formality that prevailed before. But as we have just now seen, this tendency is already losing itself again in the perception, that the constitutional life of the Church is after all itself the best form, in which to seek her spiritual renovation; and her effort is now accordingly to understand and carry out practically her own original spirit, rather than to fly from it as something false and bad. This she finds is likely to prove in the end the true secret of her strength and prosperity; as it has already served indeed to make her more united and harmonious within herself, than she ever was before. Her relations moreover to the old world, now brought so near by constant correspondence and emigration, indicate more and more clearly every year, that no other course than this would be answerable at all to her ecclesiastical vocation. Never was it more reasonable and important than it is just at this time, that as a *German* Church she should remain true to her German character, and *not* renounce it in favor of any other. This is coming to be felt apparently more and more, on all sides; so that the question may be considered as now fully settled indeed, not without something of a crisis — especially within the last two years — that the Church will adhere still to the genius of her own historical life, as having clearly no call or right to persist in her separate organization at all, under any other character. She will be German, and not Puritan; Catholic, as well as Protestant; historical, no less than biblical; bound, and at the same time free; in opposition to all mechanical tradition, all lifeles sta-

bility, whether in theology or church life ; cherishing childlike reverence for the past, only to look beyond the present always, with youthful faith and hope, to a more perfect future.

In these circumstances, the Dutch and German Churches might still walk happily together in the bonds of the Triennial Convention, (since the connection after all is very loose,) if only full allowance were made on each side for the distinctive character of the other. But this is more perhaps, than the case as the world now stands, can reasonably be expected to admit ; and if so, it must be plain of course that the two bodies are not yet prepared for union, even under this loose and imperfect form. It may be doubted, whether either branch of the German Church in this country can enter into any very close connection with a body of different origin and constitution, without being required to sacrifice for the purpose all its own nature. Such a sacrifice, involving as it must a total divorce from the rich church life of Germany itself, ought not to be thought of at this juncture. The most natural alliance after all in this case, would be one between the two German bodies themselves, as in Germany ; on the basis of their common nationality and substantially common faith. If such a union *could* be consummated, in an inward solid way, it would open at once, in the relations now coming to exist, between the old world and the new, a long vista of results, vast and momentous, to the end of which no human vision could reach.

## IX. THEOLOGY OF THE CATECHISM.

*Seal of general approbation. Œcumenical character. Objectiveness. Earnest practical spirit. Doctrinal reserve. Opposed to all Pelagianism. Theory of sin and redemption. Relations to high Calvinism on the subject of the decrees. Theory of the sacraments, and of good works.*

The high estimation in which the Heidelberg Catechism has always been held in the Church, forms in itself an argument of its great worth. When we consider the circumstances under which it appeared, and then take into view the reputation and authority which it so soon acquired in every direction, we are made to feel that it must have been pre-eminently adapted to meet and satisfy the ends embraced in its design. Its authors were as theologians comparatively young; not in the rank properly of the *Reformers* technically so called; without any particular ecclesiastical weight for the Church at large. The Palatinate was just introduced into the sisterhood of the Reformed Churches, with large participation still in the old Lutheran life with which it was on all sides surrounded. The Catechism was wholly a provincial interest; intended to serve the wants of a single country, without reference to any broader use. And yet it was received almost at once, throughout the entire Reformed Church, with admiration and respect, as the best formulary of its kind which had yet been produced within the communion.

The church had other valuable Catechisms already in use; and it might have been expected that the one framed by Calvin in particular, would have been more likely than any other to assert a general permanent supremacy within her borders. But all gave way, in this respect to the new Catechism of the Palatinate. The authority of others continued to be at best provincial or national only, and not general. So also with the different Confessions of Faith. Each country had its own, formed for itself and limited to its own use. Only the Heidelberg Catechism might be said to carry a truly œcumenical character, as the acknowledged symbol of the Church as a whole. It was welcomed and applauded in Switzerland, France, England, Scotland, and Holland, as well as by all who were favorably disposed towards the Reformed faith in Germany itself. Nor was this praise transient; an ephemeral burst of applause, succeeded again by general neglect. On the contrary, the authority of the Catechism grew with its age. It became *the* Catechism emphatically of the Reformed Church; the counterpart in full of Luther's Catechism, in its central relation to the other great Protestant confession, as distinguished by Luther's name. In this character, we find the Heidelberg Catechism quoted and appealed to, on all sides, by both friends and foes. It formed the text book of theology in learned universities. Profound divines, *(Ursinus, Alting, Piscator, Cocceius, A. Schultens, &c.)* have made it the basis of their dogmatic systems, in this way. Innumerable pulpits and schools have lent their aid, to give it voice and power in the world. It has

been as the daily bread of the sanctuary to millions, generation after generation. Never was a Catechism more honored, in the way of translations, commentaries and expositions.

All this implies an extraordinary merit in the Catechism itself. We may allow indeed that the terms in which some of the old divines have spoken of its excellence, are carried beyond due measure. But this general testimony of the whole Reformed Church in its favor, must even be of force to show that they had good reason to speak loudly on this point. Such wide spread and long continued symbolical authority, admitted in so free a way, could not be the result of mere accident. To command such favor, the Catechism must have been undoubtedly *worthy* of it, in its own constitution.

The fact of its meeting such general favor is important in another view. It shows that the Catechism was the product, truly and fully, of the religious life of the Reformed Church at the time. No creed or confession can be of genuine force, that has not this character. The life must go before the creed, and pour itself into it as its proper form. The creed may come to its utterance in the first place, through the medium of a single mind; but the single mind, in such case, must ever be the bearer of the general life in whose name it speaks; otherwise its voice will not be heard nor felt. Here is the proper criterion of a true church confession, whether it be in the character of a liturgy, catechism, or hymn book. It must be the life of the Church itself, embodied through some proper organ in such form of

speech, as is at once recognized and responded to by the Church at large as its own word. This relation between word and life, is happily exhibited in the case of the Heidelberg Catechism. Though in one sense a private work, it was by no means the product of simply individual reflection, on the part either of one or many. Ursinus, in the preparation of it, was the organ of a religious life, far more general and comprehensive than his own. The Catechism is the utterance of the Reformed faith, as it stood at the time, and found expression for itself through his person. The evidence of this is found, in the free, full response with which it was met, on the part of the Church, not only in the Palatinate, but also in other lands. It was as though the whole Reformed Church heard, and joyfully recognized, her own voice, in the Heidelberg Catechism. No product of mere private judgment, or private will, *could* have come thus into such universal favor.

This peculiar virtue of the Catechism, reveals itself in its whole constitution and spirit. It is characterized by a sort of priestly solemnity and unction, which all are constrained to reverence and respect. In attending upon its instructions, we seem to listen to the voice of the Church, and not to the words of any single human teacher. It was this feeling, no doubt, which led some formerly to challenge for it a kind of supernatural character, something like inspiration in fact, or at least an extraordinary presence of the Spirit in its composition. Ursinus, with all his abilities, was felt in this work, as Bullinger expresses it, to have fairly tran-

scended himself. He did so in fact; and in a deep and true sense, we may even say that he *was* inspired. He spake not of himself nor from himself simply; but it was the life of the Church, (which is always truly a divine life,) that sought, and found expression through his words. It is this pre-eminently that imparts to the Catechism its power and glory.

It is not merely a form of sound words for the understanding; as though one had sat down, and in the way of abstract reflection compiled a scheme or theory of the christian faith, for others to look upon and study. The Catechism is more than mere doctrine. It is doctrine apprehended and represented continually, in the form of life. It begins with the misery of man in his natural state; sets forth, in the second place, the glorious plan of redemption; and represents, in the end, the proper practical fruits of this great salvation, in the life of the regenerated man. The method is said to have been borrowed from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans; which in like manner exhibits first the helplessness of the human race under the law, then the gospel method of righteousness, and finally, from the twelfth chapter to the end, the duties which spring naturally from the principle of christian gratitude. However this may be, the construction of the Catechism as a whole is simple, beautiful and clear; while the freshness of a sacred religious feeling breathes through its whole execution. It is for the heart full as much as for the head. The pathos of a deep toned piety flows like an under current, through all its teachings, from beginning to end. This serves to impart a

character of dignity and force to its very style, which at times, with all its simplicity, becomes truly eloquent. What can be more fine, for instance, than the question and answer, with which the whole system is introduced? Never perhaps have the substance and worth of the christian salvation, as a whole, been more comprehensively, forcibly, and touchingly presented, in so small a compass. We may refer also to the 27th and 28th Questions, as particular instances, in which the same elevation of tone and expression is strikingly displayed. The Catechism of Luther is eminently distinguished for its excellence also, in the whole view now described. It is high praise to say of the Heidelberg Catechism, that it can bear a favorable comparison with that symbol in this respect. As it regards popularity and force of expression indeed, the Catechism of Luther is allowed to have the advantage; but the Reformed Catechism excels it, on the other hand, in the richness of its contents, and the order with which they are inwardly digested.

The Catechism is of course throughout decidedly Protestant. Occasionally it assumes even an openly polemical aspect, towards the errors of the Church of Rome. It is besides clearly Calvinistic or Reformed, in opposition to the Lutheran confession; particularly in the form in which this last is exhibited, as complete finally in the Form of Concord. At the same time however, its character is remarkably broad and free. This results from its practical constitution, as just explained, and from the fact no doubt also in some measure of its *German* origin. All thorny, dialectic sub-

tleties, of force for the understanding only, and having but little value for the heart and life, are for the most part carefully avoided. The knotty points of Calvinism, as they have been called, are not brought forward as necessary objects of orthodox belief one way or the other. Only in such form, could the Catechism have gained such universal credit and authority, as we find allowed to it in fact throughout the entire Reformed Church. For there were material differences in the Church itself, with regard to the way in which certain doctrines were to be carried out theoretically to their last consequences, for the understanding. Had the Catechism allowed itself to pronounce a definite decision on such points of divergent opinion, it must necessarily have shrunk in the same proportion into the character of a particular rather than general confession. By avoiding this, it became a mirror for the true life of the Reformed Church as a whole. France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland, were not exactly of one mind, as to much that might be comprehended in the details of the Calvinistic system; but they could move hand in hand together, *so far* at least as they were required to go by the Heidelberg Catechism; and on this basis accordingly they were willing to join their common faith and common profession, without regard for the time to such differences as might possibly lie beyond.

It has sometimes been made an objection to the Catechism, that it is not sufficiently definite and explicit on some of these hard points of Calvinism. But we should consider this to be rather one of its highest re-

commendations. For children particularly, such excursions into the territory of metaphysics, in the name of religious instruction, are ever to be deprecated and deplored. But we may go farther, and say that they are wholly out of character in any church confession or creed. No Church has a right, to incorporate them in any way into its basis of ecclesiastical communion. In any case an extensive, complicated creed must be regarded as a great evil ; and the Church is to be congratulated, that can be content to measure its orthodoxy by so simple and general a formulary as the Heidelberg Catechism, to the exclusion of every more narrow standard. No platform of faith should ever be *less* broad. Whether even this be not too narrow, may well be made a question.

Some have pretended indeed that the Catechism carries, occasionally at least, an actually Arminian sense, in the view it takes of the plan of salvation. Arminus himself, as we have seen, appealed to it at times, as being in harmony with his own views ; and the same thing was done also by his followers. But the appeal was not felt to carry with it any real weight. The Arminians showed plainly enough, that they did not themselves honestly believe the Catechism to be on their side ; while the whole Reformed Church, with the Synod of Dort at its head, united in holding it up to the view of the world as a true witness of their common faith. So far as the plan of salvation is concerned, in its relation to human sinfulness on the one hand and God's grace on the other, the system of doctrine contained in the Heidelberg Catechism, as a whole, is

clearly the same that was held by the Evangelical Protestant Church in general, in the sixteenth century, in opposition to the pelagianizing errors of Rome.

It begins accordingly, by asserting in the strongest terms the general depravity and corruption of our nature. Not only the fact that all men are involved in the contradiction of sin is affirmed (Qu. 3—5.), but this fact is referred to its true ground as holding in the very life of the race itself (Qu. 6, 7). The evil is deep and broad as humanity itself, and not of a kind therefore to be ever surmounted by the will of the single sinner separately considered. This is a blow at the root of all Pelagianism. An organic ruin needs an organic redemption. That which is born of the flesh, is and must remain flesh; can never leave itself behind; can never transcend its own sphere (Qu. 8.). Our spiritual nature is in ruins; inclined to all evil, disabled for all good but still under law, and possessed of a capacity for salvation. If it be asked, *how* this ruin took place, the Catechism pretends not to fathom the full depth of the mystery. It asserts only that it came not from God, but from the free will of man himself. Our first parents were holy, and had power to keep their first estate; but by wilful disobedience they fell, and so brought sin and death upon the entire race. The origin of sin, the Catechism seeks not to explain. It rejects Fatalism on the one hand, and Pelagianism on the other; and like the bible itself, takes its course firmly between these two irreligious extremes, leaving the understanding to get along with its own embarrassment in the case as it best can. There are truths that

transcend the understanding; to be grasped only by a higher power.

What was lost in Adam, the Catechism teaches in the next place, has been recovered for us again, and more than recovered, in Christ. *He* is the fountain of the whole christian salvation, (Qu. 18,) having in himself all the qualifications that are needed to constitute a perfect medium of reconciliation between the human nature and the divine (Qu. 12—17.); being in his own person in fact the fullest conjunction of both; so that "the same human nature which hath sinned," is brought to make a full satisfaction for sin, and to become thus at the same time the righteousness of God, in Him as the second Adam. To this high benefit the individual sinner is advanced, by union with Christ, through faith; which involves a living apprehension, not simply of an abstract doctrine, but of the whole perennial *fact* of christianity as embodied in the Apostolic Creed (Qu. 21—59). The great cardinal doctrine of justification by faith alone, through the imputation of Christ's satisfaction, righteousness and holiness, in opposition to the idea of all merit on the part of the believer himself, is asserted in the strongest language (Qu. 60—64). This threefold imputation itself implies however, that the objective righteousness which is thus set over to our account in Christ, involves from the very start the principle of our personal sanctification. Apprehended by faith, it has become already the power of a new divine life in the subject of this faith; "for it is impossible that those who are thus implanted into Christ, should *not* bring forth fruits of

thankfulness," (Qu. 64). Faith itself, comprehending thus in itself the whole force of the christian life, is no product of the human will. The Holy Ghost "works it in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments" (Qu. 65—85).

All is of grace; and the divine sovereignty reigns supreme throughout the whole work. But now when we fall back on the deep questions, that concern the relation of this sovereignty to human freedom, the Catechism modestly forbears again to return any answer. Not only does it shrink from asserting the supralapsarian theory of the decrees, the only consistent form of metaphysical Calvinism; but the whole doctrine of the decrees is passed over in silence, except as comprised in the providence of God. The question of predestination is brought no closer than this, (Qu. 20,) that of Adam's fallen posterity those only are saved by Christ, "who are ingrafted into him, and receive all his benefits, by a true faith." Still less of course, do we hear of anything like a decree of absolute reprobation. The Catechism again knows nothing formally of a limited or particular atonement, restricting the intrinsic force and value of Christ's work to a certain portion of the human family, with the exclusion of the rest from all possibility of salvation. On the contrary, regardless of all difficulties and true to all sound religious feeling, it asserts, with the unequivocal sense of the scriptures themselves, (Ques. 37,) that he "sustained, in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sins *of all mankind*;" which is of course implied also, in the previous declaration, (Ques. 16,) that the

satisfaction which God's justice requires for sin, must be made *by the nature* which hath sinned.

So also if the question be asked, whether God's grace be irresistible in the conversion of men, and incapable of being altogether lost afterwards, the Heidelberg Catechism refuses to give an answer. As it does not teach an unconditional election, so neither does it make salvation to be independent of all contrary motion on the part of the human will. The doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, as it is called, it leaves in a great measure unsettled. The nearest approach to it is in the first Question. This however places the security of the believer after all, not so much on the absolute purpose of God to save him, as upon the actual relation at the time subsisting between him and his faithful Savior Jesus Christ. The inward assurance of eternal life at least, as we all know, may still fail, through a relapse into sin; and it is not clear, from the Catechism, that along with this loss of the Holy Spirit, the regenerate may not in some cases lose also their whole interest in Christ, and so fall back to perdition.

Here then is a material difference, between the Heidelberg Catechism and the symbolical books generally of the Reformed Church. It may be said indeed that the Calvinistic points to which we have now referred, are at least involved in the system which it teaches. So it must have seemed of course to that part of the Reformed body, for which these points had became of confessional authority; otherwise it could not have been endorsed, by the Synod of Dort for instance, as sound and orthodox. But this only shows that the Catechism

leaves these points untouched. They lie *beyond* its horizon. The Belgic Church might consider them necessary to complete its system; but there was always a part of the Reformed Church which thought differently. The Catechism is so constructed as to allow this difference; and this not by accident, as we may clearly see, but with deliberate design. The authors of it seem to have held their own theological convictions purposely in abeyance, that they might be true to the objective church life with which they were surrounded. This we all know included much, that could never have been satisfied with anything like extreme Calvinism, on the subject of the decrees. From all this accordingly the Catechism was made carefully to abstain.

Some have even charged it with contradictions on this account; because it appears occasionally to favor in one direction, what it might be thought to oppose again in another. But in this, it resembles the bible itself; which also gives countenance occasionally to views that seem metaphysically to conflict with each other; though no doubt they are capable of full reconciliation, in some deeper ground, which we perhaps may have no power now to fathom. All great truths indeed are polar; comprise in themselves opposite forces or powers, whose very contradiction is found to be necessary at last to the everlasting harmony of their constitution.

The Catechism, like the Bible, is willing to tolerate *such* contradictions; and does so in fact. Its orthodoxy is not necessarily that of the Belgic Confession. It allows this of course; but is does not require it. As a platform of ecclesiastical communion it includes thus

much; but we are bound in conscience to say, it includes also a great deal more.

On the sacraments, the Catechism is explicitly Calvinistic; steering throughout a careful middle course, between Lutheranism on the one hand, and Zuinglianism on the other. Here again however, we may observe a certain effort after the widest practicable comprehension, in its representations. There was some Zuinglian feeling in the Palatinate, it would seem, along with the predominant Lutheran and Calvinistic; and we find accordingly a sort of irenical condescension in the Catechism even on this side, such as we do not meet with in the Calvinistic symbols commonly. The Gallic, Old Scotch, and Low Dutch Confessions, for instance, are more uncompromisingly strong. The Catechism does not go so far as to say, with the Low Dutch Confession, that what is eaten in the sacrament is the *very natural body of Christ*, ("ipsissimum Christi corpus naturale;") and that what is drunk is his *true blood*. Still its general sense is sufficiently clear, as corresponding in full with the sacramental theory of Calvin.*

Faith, uniting us in the power of a common life with Christ, is the fountain of all good works. The third part of the Catechism is occupied accordingly with the law of God, as the rule of christian life, and the duty of prayer. Here the Ten Commandments and the Lord's

* For a full exhibition of this theory, as embodied in the symbolical books of the Reformed Church generally, in the sixteenth century, the reader is referred to the author's work entitled the *Mystical Presence*.

Prayer are introduced, as the basis of all its instructions. In Luther's Catechism the Commandments come first. It has been said, that the opposite order as exhibited in the Heidelberg Catechism, (and in Calvin's also,) indicates a legal tendency, on the side of the Reformed Church. But it is hard to see why. The law is the rule of that new obedience to which the believer is formed in Christ; and this obedience does but carry out and complete the faith from which it springs. As works without faith have no worth, so also faith without works is dead.

## X. CHURCH SPIRIT OF THE CATECHISM.

*German origin. Relations to Lutheranism and the Augsburg Confession. Prussian Church. Positive and catholic. Historical basis in the Apostles' Creed. Sacramental feeling. Churchly associations. Old Palatinate Liturgy. Baptismal educational religion. Confirmation. Conclusion.*

To understand fully the character of the Heidelberg Catechism, regard must be had to the ecclesiastical connections and conditions, in the midst of which it had its origin. It cannot be estimated fairly, apart from its history. Every genuine spiritual creation, such as we suppose the Catechism to be, includes in itself necessarily a life of its own, which is at the same time the product organically of the general life, with which it is surrounded and from which it springs. Only in view of

its birth-soil and native associations, can it be at last truly and adequately comprehended.

In the case before us, two facts particularly, under this view, need to kept always in mind. The Catechism is of *German* origin, and we may say also in a certain sense of *Lutheran* extraction. Two most significant considerations truly, in the determination of its church character.

The Catechism, we say, is German; the growth of German soil; the product of German life. Its birth is not to be traced to Switzerland, Scotland, or Holland. Though approved by the Synod of Dort, it is not just such a Catechism as a large part of the Synod of Dort would itself have produced. Still less is it such a Catechism as the spirit of English Puritanism might have been expected to produce, in the days of Cromwell, or at any time since.

It is also closely related, in origin and constitution, to the Lutheran confession. This is shown by its history, and lies involved besides in the fact of its being German. The peculiarities of Lutheranism, as distinguished from the general tendency of the Reformed Church, in their common opposition to the Church of Rome, resolve themselves very much at last, it must be confessed, into the distinctive genius of the German national mind; of which Luther himself may be taken as a living, personal mirror and type; its most perfect personification in fact, in the sphere of religion. Any *German* Church must be expected then, in the nature of the case, to appear in some affinity with the religious life of this communion. Even the Roman Catholic

Church in Germany shows a material difference, in this view, from the character which distinguishes the same faith in Italy or France. So also, in the case of the German *Reformed* Church. With the German nationality for its basis, the German life circulating through all its veins, it could not be the same thing in full with the same confession in Holland or Scotland. With all their opposition, the two creeds in Germany could never fully fly asunder; their mutual repulsion always showing in fact the force of a mutual attraction, as though each were all the time tormented with the secret feeling, that it could not be complete without the other. It is only in the German Church indeed, we may say, that the two great divisions of the Protestant evangelical faith have seemed able, to this day, to understand one another at all, in their principal difference, so as to perceive clearly either their own contradiction or agreement in its true ground. The Church of England has sometimes been styled *Ecclesia Lutheranizans;* but the title belongs more properly to the Reformed Church of Germany itself.

The Palatinate, as we have seen, was originally Lutheran. Its transition moreover to the Reformed confession, was not intended to be a renunciation of Lutheranism in full; but is to be viewed rather as a protest merely against the form in which it was held by such men as Westphal, Hesshuss, Brentz, Andreæ, &c; the high orthodoxy in short of the Stuttgart Confession, which became triumphant afterwards in the Form of Concord. The Lutheran Church of Germany included in itself from the start two diverging tendencies;

closely related; but necessarily variant and hostile at the same time, if allowed to assert their claims. It was believed by such men as Melancthon, that no rupture was required on this account. The orthodoxy of the Church, they supposed, might safely make itself so wide as to embrace both forms of thinking. But this expectation was disappointed. It came, as we have seen, to an open war; deep, earnest, violent, and long; between high Lutheranism and Calvinistic Lutheranism; agitating all Germany. The movement in the Palatinate, and in Bremen, belonged to this great dialectic process; as did also the movement afterwards in Anhalt, Hesse, Brandenburg; the whole development, in one word, of the *German Reformed Church*. All hinged on the eucharistic question; and in the case of this question, on the mode simply, not the fact, of Christ's real presence in the sacrament. The controversy lay, not between Lutheranism and Zuinglianism; but between Lutheranism and Calvinism. No rebellion, properly speaking, was intended against the Augsburg Confession. In the form in which it had been expounded and defined by Melancthon himself, all were willing to own its authority.* The Heidelberg Catechism was designed to interpret, rather than to contradict, the Augs-

* In this sense, it must have been subscribed by Calvin himself, when he stood in the service of the Church at Strasburg. See Planck's Gesch. d. prot. Theol. book VI, chap. 1. Also, Salig's Hist. of the Augsburg Confession, book II, chap. 13. Calvin was both preacher and professor in Strasburg, and stood in high credit at the time with the Lutheran Church generally; taking part in its public transactions. "I do not reject at all the Augsburg Confession," he says in one

burg Confession; to explain the sense, in which it was held by the Church in the Palatinate. Frederick the Third had himself signed it, in its unaltered form, at Naumburg, a. 1561, a short time before the Catechism appeared; to which subscription we find him afterwards publicly appealing as still valid, in the year 1566, when called to account by the imperial diet at Augsburg; with such success too, that his right to be recognized as a member politically of the Lutheran confession, was formally acknowledged by this august body. Ursinus moreover was the special friend of Melancthon himself, the author of the Augsburg Confession; to which of course he stood sworn also, in its Melancthonian sense, as a teacher in Bresslau. How in such circumstances could the Heidelberg Catechism be anything else, than simply German Calvinistic, or Semi-lutheran we may say, in its theological constitution and spirit?

Heidelberg professed indeed, in this case, to make common cause, simply with Wittemberg, against the high toned theology of Tubingen and Jena. The theologians of Wittemberg, it is true, hard pressed after the death of Melancthon to maintain the place, pretended not to acknowledge this connection. But all the world has since allowed, that they were chargeable in doing so

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of his letters, a. 1557, "having long ago very cheerfully subscribed it, in the sense in which it has been explained by its author." In the year 1539, he presented to the ecclesiastical authorities of Strasburg a particular confession of his doctrine on the Lord's Supper, signed by Farel and Viret along with himself; in which it is most explicitly declared, that Christ communicates to us, not simply his spirit, but the substance also of his flesh and blood, for our nourishment unto everlasting life.

with disingenuous equivocation, being brought into a snare in the case by the fear of man.

The history of the general German Reformed Church subsequently, serves throughout to exemplify still farther its close relationship, as now affirmed, with the Lutheran Church. It was always more or less reserved on the subject of the decrees; particularly in Anhalt and Brandenburg; quite satisfied here in fact, for the most part, with the orthodoxy of the Augsburg Confession. The *Repetitio Anhaltina* proclaims in fact its formal assent to this Confession, in full; and on the article of the Lord's Supper goes so far as to say, that "along with the bread and wine is truly distributed and received, that very body which was offered for us on the altar of the cross, and the self-same precious blood that flowed from the sacred wounds of Christ, freely shed for us for the remission of sins." Specially noticeable is the spirit of the German Reformed Church of Prussia, as exhibited to us originally in the electorate of Brandenburg. The celebrated *Confession of Sigismund* broadly declares its adhesion to the Augsburg Confession, as presented to Charles V. in the year 1530; asserts the sacramental presence of Christ's true body and the true blood, in the Lord's Supper; but only in the Calvinistic sense; while, at the same time it distintly rejects the idea of all unconditional election and reprobation. Along with this Confession the Reformed Church of Brandenburg acknowledged as authoritative for its faith, the Articles of the *Leipsic Conference*, held in the year 1631, and the *Declaration of Thorn*, bearing date 1645. Both these instruments

again do homage to the Augsburg Confession; though refusing to admit of course the high Lutheran positions of the Form of Concord, as forming any part of its true and proper sense. On the sacramental presence, the language of both is peculiarly strong.*

In the end, as we all know, it has come to a formal union of the two confessions, not only in Prussia, but

*These confessions of Leipsic and Thorn grew out of efforts made to secure a religious union, between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the first case, and with the Romanists also in the second. They show how far the Reformed theologians were willing to go, towards a common rule of faith. The design in both cases failed; but the spirit of the Reformed Church was exemplified at least, with good advantage, in its publicly adhering, as it did subsequently in the kingdom of Prussia, to the irenical platform here proposed. A certain *Dr. J. Berg*, of orthodox memory, appears particularly prominent, on the Reformed side, in the conference at Leipsic. Here it is said, in plump terms, that in the Lord's Supper, along with the bread and wine, the substantial essence (das Wesen und die Substanz) of the body and blood of Jesus Christ himself, is the object of an actual *present* participation to all worthy communicants, through the power of faith. No less plump and explicit is the Declaration of Thorn. The elements, it tells us, are most certain media and effectual instruments, by which the body and blood of Christ are exhibited or offered to all communicants, and truly given and received, in the case of believers, in the way of salutary, vivific food to the soul; we participate especially in the very substance of his body and blood, that self-same victim that hung upon the cross for the sins of the world; and this, not only as regards the soul, but as regards our body also; for while the act of participation is primarily spiritual, by faith, the force of it extends also to our whole persons, "inserting and uniting our very bodies into Christ's body, by the power of his Spirit, unto the hope of the resurrection and eternal life, that we may be flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones." *Niemeyer's Coll. Conf. Ref. pp.* 662, 663, 681—683.

throughout Protestant Germany generally. The confessional differences are not yet indeed fully abolished; but it has been felt, that they were no sufficient reason, to keep the two Churches asunder. They constitute now, (as they ought to do all the world over,) one Evangelical Communion; and in such form are at this time actively engaged in working out, as they best may, the difficult theological and ecclesiastical problems that lie in their way.*

*Much is still wanting to make this union inwardly complete, in the full reconciliation of all confessional contradictions. As it is however, it must be considered a great point gained in the history of the Protestant Church. No wonder that good men in Germany, not understanding our difficulties in this free country, should get out of patience at times with the *American* German Churches, for not consenting to unite in the same way. No wonder that many coming over here, should feel it a sore sacrifice, to be put back once more on an election between *Lutheran* and *Reformed*, after having so happily surmounted all opposition of this sort in their native land. The two German confessions *should* be one, in America as well as Europe. It is a clear case. The Augsburg Confession, as explained by Melanchton and signed by Calvin, is abundantly broad enough for both Catechisms; and on this platform the *whole* German Church, if still true in any measure to its original life, might well stand shoulder to shoulder, and hand to hand, in the Lord's work. And it deserves to be well considered, whether vast spiritual interests are not coming to be periled by our present position, in its relation particularly to the emigration which is so rapidly accumulating upon us from Germany. It is not saying too much to affirm, that as a *United Evangelical Church* our opportunity for acting advantageously on this emigration, from Maine to Texas, would be vastly more large and full of promise than it is at present. Such a United Church may yet force itself forward, under less favorable auspices. For it is hardly to be expected that the emigrant population, so very large as it

In the midst of all this close correspondence with German Lutheranism, the Heidelberg Catechism has always been recognized as the general, distinctive, confessional formulary of the whole German Reformed Church. This single fact reflects great light on its true character and spirit.

The life which it embodies is that of the Reformed Church in Germany, in the period of the Reformation; when religion had vigorous hold on the hearts of men as a divine fact, and before the rationalistic tendency involved in Protestantism had become strong enough to make itself felt on the general faith. The Catechism is itself a strikingly impressive monument of the inwardness and fulness, that characterised the religious life of the Church at the time when it was formed. Whatever we may think of the theological controversies with which the spirits of men were so actively inflamed on all sides, it is quite plain that the age was filled with the consciousness of a divine reality in the objects of its faith, such as we too often miss in the exhibitions of later history. The Catechism is no cold workmanship merely of the understanding. It is full of feeling and faith. The joyousness of a fresh, simple, childlike trust, appears beautifully, touchingly interwoven with all its divinity. It is only here and

is coming to be, will consent to be ruled permanently by our American view of what is expedient and necessary in this case; while it is not to be desired certainly, that it should be left, without ecclesiastical organization, at the mercy of fanaticism and infidelity. As things are at present going, the old German Churches are of very little account religiously, for the ocean of German life that is now rolling in upon us, wave after wave, from the shores of the old world.

there, that we feel in its pages the presence of the war spirit, with which its origin was on all sides surrounded. As a whole, it is moderate, gentle and soft; an image thus, we may suppose, of the quiet though earnest soul of Ursinus himself. It is positive or affirmative mainly in its teachings, rather than negative. Such was the character of the Protestant faith generally, in the sixteenth century. It did not stand in mere contradiction to the faith of Rome. It had large contents of its own, an inward independent life, which it felt bound to assert; and it was the assertion of this life only, which threw it necessarily into the attitude of protest against the errors of the ancient Church. In all this of course, there was no thought of breaking all historical connection with the life of the ancient Church itself. On the contrary, the sense of the objective, the historical, the catholic, and the always enduring, in the Church, as distinguished from the waywardness of mere private judgment and individual will, wrought powerfully in the whole theology of the age. The grand characteristic of the period, was its power to *create*, rather than its power to destroy; unlike the genius of that shallow war which is now too often waged against Rome, from the standpoint of mere rationalistic contradiction and denial; strong in its affectation of pulling down, but impotent as water towards all purposes of building up. The sixteenth century was not simply Protestant; it was Catholic, *Reformed* Catholic, at the same time. So especially, we may say, in Germany, the cradle properly of the Reformation life. In this catholic church spirit, the Heidelberg Catechism large-

ly participates. In no other Reformed symbol probably, are the great constituents of the true and proper character of this confession, liberty and reverence for authority—the sense of the individual and the sense of the general—more fairly and happily combined.

A fine illustration of the catholic, historical feeling of the Catechism, is found in the fact that so large a part of its instructions are based upon the Apostles' Creed. In this, it is true, it does but show itself conformable to the general spirit of Protestantism, in the age in which it was formed. No catechism could be considered complete, no confession sound, in the sixteenth century, without a formal recognition of this ancient ground work of christian doctrine. The case, we all know, has become lamentably changed in later times. It is not saying too much to affirm, that with a large part of our modern Protestantism, the Creed has come to be well nigh shorn of its credit altogether. Even where it may be allowed theoretically to be of some authority, it is but too common still to make little or no account of it practically. It has become silent, to a fearful extent, in the family, in the school, and in the pulpit. Rationalism and the spirit of sect—the great plague of our present christianity—can never be expected of course to take any pleasure in the Creed. Puritanism too, though professing to regard it with some favor, cannot be expected to admire it much at heart. It is hard for it to say : *I believe in a holy catholic Church ;* even if the article on the descent to Hades, were out of the way. In what Puritan church is the Creed recited ? In what Puritan family is it re-

peated by the children? Is it of any true *symbolical* force, in one word, for Puritanism at all? Puritanism sees nothing divine in the Creed; feels no respect for it, as the first grand outbirth of the christian life, in the form of believing confession. Puritanism in fact holds itself competent in full, to manufacture, on the shortest notice, for the use of Christendom, a *better* creed; or if need be, half a dozen better Creeds; quarrying the whole material fresh from the bible, in the way of private judgment, without any thanks to this old *Symbolum Apostolicum* whatsoever.* Altogether a very

*Witness the endless "covenants" of single Congregational churches, in New England and the West. Witness the Confession of Faith, not long since framed by a few New England missionaries at Constantinople, for the organization and control of the new Protestant Armenian Church, whose foundations have been laid in that city; a work professedly drawn by *original* deduction from the bible; elaborated in the course of a few days or hours; without one syllable in recognition of the ancient fundamental Creed of Christendom! The greatest marvel of all perhaps, is that this bold way of going to work in so solemn a case, should be quietly accepted so generally, (by the whole American Board for instance,) as nothing out of the way, a mere matter of course. Witness again the articles of our late World's Convention at London. Christendom to be united on *such* a basis! An Evangelical Alliance, that might seem never to have heard of the Symbolum Apostolicum!—A much sounder feeling is at work in Germany, with all its errors. At this very moment an active protest is sounding on all sides, against a Form of Ordination proposed for the use of the United Evangelical Church in Prussia, by the General Synod which met last summer in Berlin; on the ground that it does not embrace in full the Apostles' Creed. The formula is good as far as it goes; better altogether than the articles of the London Convention. But why should it not give us the CREED? cries all pious Germany, with Hengstenberg and his thunder-toned *Evangelische Kirchen-Zeitung* at its head.

curious and significant fact; well worthy of consideration, in any estimate that may be made of the posture and spirit of modern Protestantism, as compared with the Protestantism of the sixteenth century. For in the end it is most certain, that this low esteem of the Creed is at once the fruit and evidence of a low conception also of the Church. A sense for the Creed, and a sense for Historical Religion and the Church, must ever go hand in hand together; and where the first is wanting in any measure, we may know assuredly that the second is wanting also to the same extent.

The Heidelberg Catechism reveals its church character, in its reverence for the Creed. It not only makes use of it as a text, but enters with hearty interest and affection into its general spirit. Take it altogether, its commentary on "the articles of our Catholic undoubted Christian faith," as here brought into view, must be considered peculiarly happy. We have to regret indeed always the turn given (Qu. 44) to the clause, in the fourth arricle, *He descended into Hell.* The Catechism asserts, on the topic, what is in itself a most interesting and important truth; but we must shut our eyes to all history, to suppose that it is *the* truth intended in this particular case by the language of the Creed. The doctrine is sound, but the interpretation is bad.

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A most wonderful fact, in the present posture of that spiritually tumultuating land. The cry will be heard. No Confession will be permitted now to stand in Germany, that shall refuse to do full homage to the Apostles' Creed. So let it be, throughout the universal Church!

The church feeling of the Catechism appears again, in the high account which it makes of the sacraments; here also in full harmony with the general Protestant spirit of the sixteenth century, and in noticeable contrast with much at least of the Protestant spirit of the present time. The sacraments are held to carry with them an objective force. Their constitution includes grace, for all who are prepared to turn it to account. Thus Baptism is not only a symbol of the washing of regeneration, (Qu. 73), but a solemn authentication of the fact itself — the proper body of its inward soul — in all cases where the requisite conditions of its presence are at hand. Children too, born of believers and so entitled to the privilege, must be admitted into the Church by this ordinance, (Qu. 74), as the seal and pledge of their saving relationship to Christ; and should be trained up as christians, children of God and not children of the devil, accordingly. So again, the Lord's Supper is the actual bearer of a divine life; the mediatorial life of the Son of God, designated as his body and blood; with which he feeds the souls of his people, by the power of the Holy Ghost, unto everlasting salvation (Qu. 75). It is not a token merely of our interest in the atonement of Christ, but serves actually to unite us more and more to his sacred body (Qu. 76) thus helping forward that great mystery, by which we are to become fully like him at last in the power of a common life.

In full harmony with the catholic and sacramental character of the Catechism, as now represented, we find it to be churchly also in all its connections and

associations ; to an extent indeed, which it is not easy for us now, in the Puritan atmosphere with which we are surrounded, fully to perceive and admit. Its proper historical relations in this view, particularly as they are presented to us in the *German* Church, are far enough removed from that character of spiritualistic baldness, in which too many imagine the perfection of Protestantism to consist at the present time. They include, the altar, the organ, and the gown ; church lessons, and a church year, with its regular cycle of religious festivals ; repetitions of the Lord's Prayer and Creed ; liturgical services ; an entire order of worship in short, which to the nostrils of modern Puritanism, it is to be feared, would carry no small stench of popery itself throughout. Think of the fact however as we may, there it stands ; and we must let it go for what it is worth. It shows at least that the original and proper church life of the Heidelberg Catechism was something different from modern Puritanism ; and that Puritan associations and modes of thought are not exactly the sphere, in all probability, in which this life is likely to be either rightly understood or fully turned to account.

Let us cast our eyes here a moment, on the old German Liturgy of the Palatinate ; once used even in this country ; now fast sinking into oblivion.* It is divided

*I have no copy of this old Liturgy at hand ; but remembering to have met with one some time ago in the possession of the venerable father Pomp of Easton, I took the liberty of requesting the Rev. J. H. A. Bomberger, of that place, to make a special inspection of it for my use, in the present case. This service he has done to good purpose ; and it is

into four parts: I. DOCTRINE; II. PUBLIC PRAYER; III. SACRAMENTS; IV. CHURCH USAGES. *Part First* contains directions for preaching and catechetical exercises; among other things a form of exhortation and brief prayer introductory to the sermon; how preaching is to be conducted on the Sabbath; on the prescribed week days, viz. Wednesdays and Fridays; on days for humiliation and prayer, (first Wednesday of every month); on festival days, &c. — *Part Second* contains prayers to precede and follow the sermon; special prayer for Christmas, New Year's day, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, and Whitsuntide; morning and evening prayer for every day.—*Part Third* contains an Admonition on Holy Baptism; Form of Baptism; Preparation for the Holy Supper; Communion service; Use of the keys in ecclesiastical discipline.—*Part Fourth* provides, for festival and holy days; for church Psalmody and clerical costume; announcements of marriages; visiting the sick; prayer with the sick;

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*through his eyes* accordingly, as Carlyle would say, that it is here made to pass resurrectionally before our vision. An interesting old relic; handed to the Rev. *Nicholas* Pomp, father of our Easton patriarch, on his leaving Germany as a missionary to this country, last century; date 1763; reprint according to the title page of the edition of 1684; which again, as we are informed by the introduction, is substantially the original *Kirchen-Ordnung* of the Reformed Church of the Palatinate, as published by Frederick III, in 1563, and afterwards revived, in 1585, by the prince John Casimir; only "an etlichen wenigen Orten verbessert und erklært." Are there any other copies of this old Liturgy still in the country? Could it not be deposited from some quarter in our Seminary Library, as a sort of "fossil remain," to let the German Church see hereafter what she was *before the flood?*

with the dying; administration of the sacrament to the sick; visiting prisoners; burial service.—Such are the contents general of this old German Reformed Liturgy.

The sacramental doctrine of the Liturgy corresponds in full with that of the Catechism. In one case it goes so far as to speak of redemption as not only promised, but freely granted, (versprochen und *geschenket*,) in holy baptism. All baptisms must be in the church. The service includes a repetition of the Creed. In the case of the Lord's Supper, after the preparation service, all persons intending to commune are required to come forward and take their place round the altar, to receive instruction and make confession of their repentance and faith, according to a particular form prescribed for the occasion; then the pastor *shall descend from the pulpit*, and take his place *before the table* or altar, for this service; the form itself includes, 1st an admonition to self-examination; 2. a confession of sin, to be repeated aloud by the people, it would seem, after the pastor ("sprechet derhalben *mit mir*"); and finally, 3. a formal absolution of the truly penitent, with the judgment of God against such as do not repent. It is directed that the Lord's Supper be administered in towns twice a month, in villages and country places four times a year, viz. on Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, and the first Sabbath in September; more frequently, if convenient.

It has been already mentioned that the Liturgy of the Reformed Dutch Church in this country, is founded on this old Liturgy of the Palatinate. It includes however only a small part of the original work, and this

with some modifications. Its first prayer seems to be from some different quarter; the second however is a literal translation, not of the prayer for ordinary Sabbaths, but of that used on the monthly supplication days, ("Bættagen fuer alle Noth und Anliegen der Christenheit"); not quite suitable of course for ordinary occasions. In the Form for Baptism, the German service is plainly followed; some entire passages literally translated; the Creed omitted. In the case of the Lord's Supper, the preparation service, confession, absolution, &c. are *not* found in the Dutch Liturgy. This last uses however the same high sacramental tone, in the ordinance itself; true in this respect to the old Reformed doctrine, as presented in the Belgic Confession. The full Burial Service of the German Liturgy is wanting altogether in the Dutch; as also all the prayers for Festival Days, of which this last takes no recognition.

To complete the view now taken of the churchly spirit of the Heidelberg Catechism, as illustrated in these connections and tendencies, it remains only to notice briefly the theory of religion, on which its whole meaning and use are found to be constructed. This assumes throughout, that the Church is, in a certain sense, the medium and bearer of spiritual life, for her own children; that whilst religion is a pre-eminently individual and subjective interest in one view, it is still, in another, conditioned and upheld, like all life, by an objective ground that lies without and beyond its particular subject altogether. The children of believing parents have a right to baptism: by this holy sacra-

ment, they are translated from the world over into the Church, and have a real title thus to all the grace of the new covenant; it is the duty of parents to believe this, and to train them up in the same faith; which in such case is itself the christian consciousness, while the want of it is baptismal infidelity; all the appliances of christian education are to be employed to form them to a pious and holy life, with the confidence that what is thus done for them in the Church and through the Church, (the family being in this case but a part of the church system,) carries along with it a truly divine force; at the proper season, they must be handed over to the Church, to be prepared by catechetical discipline for the other great sacrament; and finally, thus prepared, they must be introduced to all the privileges of their church state, that they may grow up from this point onward, by proper use of the means of grace, to the stature of full manhood in Christ. Right or wrong, this is the theory of the Catechism; as it was the theory indeed of the whole Church in the sixteenth century—unless we choose to include under this name, the fanaticism of the Anabaptists, and other demonstrations of a kindred kind. Religion, according to this view, is something that rests in the general life of the Church; capable of organic transmission; not by blood, nor by the force of mere natural example and teaching; but by the order of grace, as a divine, historical constitution in the Church itself, including resources, living capacities and powers, in its own being, for this very purpose. Men may refuse to believe all this, and act accordingly; but that only shows their natural infidelity for all

the realness of christianity. Faith in a life-bearing Church, comes to the same thing at last with faith in a life-giving Christ; for the Church is the Body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

The Catechism proceeds throughout on this theory of baptismal, educational religion. It is formed for the baptized children and youth of the Church; who are received and addressed, not as aliens and foreigners from the household of faith, but as church members; who have a full right to all the blessings of the covenant, in this character; and who are now to be prepared for a personal approach accordingly, to the sacramental altar. The catechumen, in this view, is addressed from the very start, as a christian: "What is *thy* only comfort in life and death?" And the answer put into his mouth, is taken in full again from the christian standpoint, and no other. I belong to Christ, he is taught to say, in soul and body; he is *my* Savior; hath fully satisfied for my sins, and delivered me from the devil; preserves me; assures me of eternal life. So also onward to the end. The Creed, with its glorious contents, is not for another simply, but for the catechumen himself. All is personal, practical, possessional. "Why art *thou* called a Christian?" it is asked; (Ques. 32,) and the answer is at once ready: "Because I am a member of Christ by faith, and thus am partaker of his anointing; that so I may confess his name, and present myself a living sacrifice to him; and that with a free and good conscience, I may fight against sin and Satan, in this life; and afterwards reign with him eternally, over all creatures."

But is it not dangerous, it may be asked, to put such language into the mouths of young persons, who may be still unconverted, and enemies in fact to the grace of the gospel? Would it not be wiser and safer to teach what christianity is in itself, without encouraging them in this way to lay claim to it for themselves? A plausible suggestion certainly; which however it is not necessary now to answer in full. Our concern here is simply with the fact, that the Catechism goes upon this method. We must add at the same time, that in doing so the Catechism does but follow the general practice of the holy catholic Church, from the beginning; which has always considered her children sacred to God by baptism, and felt it her duty to train them from childhood into this same consciousness. Hence she puts the Creed into their mouth from childhood itself; repeating it with them and before them; not waiting till they can understand and approve it fully for themselves; but seeking rather, with maternal interest, to *breathe* it into them as a portion of her own life; that they may grow up into it, and be filled with the power of it, in all subsequent time. In all this too there is much sound philosophy, as well as sound religion; for faith *is* life, and it is by life only, and not at all by mere doctrine, that it can ever be exerted in the soul. The Creed subsists properly in the life of the Church. Baptism inserts the infant into this life, objectively considered; and gives him a full right to claim it as his own; and makes it proper and necessary, that he should be engaged to lisp himself into it subjectively also, from the very sides of the cradle. If the Church be dead, this theory, held

only *as a theory*, may easily run into practical abuse; and if the Church, whether dead or alive, have no faith in her own divine constitution, the proper fruits of the system cannot be expected of course to appear. But all this is of no force against the system itself, under its true form.

The Catechism owns this churchly process of making christians. It is not general religious instruction which it proposes, in the case of the young. The very thing it designs, is to prepare them for an open personal profession of their faith, and an approach to the Lord's Supper, at a certain given time. The catechumens are candidates for *Confirmation*. All looks openly to its proper end, in this rite. Confirmation is no sacrament of course; but it is a beautifully significant ordinance, in which the sacrament of baptism may be said to come finally to its natural and necessary completion. Baptism becomes complete, only in the personal assumption of its vows on the part of its subject; this calls for *some* rite; and it is certainly hard to conceive of any more appropriate in itself, or less open to the charge of superstition, than the scriptural ceremony which the Church has in fact employed, from the earliest time, for this purpose. Confirmation and the old Catechetical System go properly together.

But enough has now been said, to show the spirit of the Heidelberg Catechism, and along with this the true genius of the German Reformed Church. Many reflections are suggested by the whole subject; on which however it would not be proper here to enlarge. The

object of this tract is accomplished, if it may serve the purpose simply of a true historical picture. One thing is certain; the German Church is not Puritan; and there is no good reason, why she should be required now to succumb absolutely to Puritan forms, and Puritan modes of thought, from whatever quarter they may be presented. She had a life of her own, once at least; which it is still important that she should understand and cherish, with becoming self-respect; if indeed she have yet any vocation to fill at all, as a separate independent Church. Not that Puritanism is to be blindly hated and opposed. We owe it much, which we are bound to acknowledge with gratitude and affection. Nor yet either that we should fall back blindly to the past, as it lies behind us in our own history. All sudden outward *reforms* of this sort, that rest upon no interior necessity in the life of the Church itself, are to be deprecated as likely to do more harm than good. But it is much, that we should be able to understand and honor the worth that actually belongs to our own life; so as to cherish it, and turn it to account, accordingly; that we may not suffer ourselves to be overwhelmed by foreign influences; but may be watchful rather, to strengthen the things that remain; and to go forward, if not in the very track, yet still in the general spirit and genius at least of those good "old paths," in which our ecclesiastical fathers delighted to walk in the age of the Reformation. Let us not cast away as "relics of popery," in such a time especially as the present, the *churchly elements* that belong of right to our original constitution. If Puritanism and Methodism, with all the ex-

cellencies they possess in their own sphere, be palpably unhistorical, unsacramental, unliturgical, and unchurchly altogether, that is no good reason surely why *we* should be all this too, in the face of the Heidelberg Catechism, and in broad violation of our whole character as a GERMAN CHURCH.

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